# Muriel Sterling

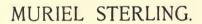
Mrs. Fletcher Webster Jewell

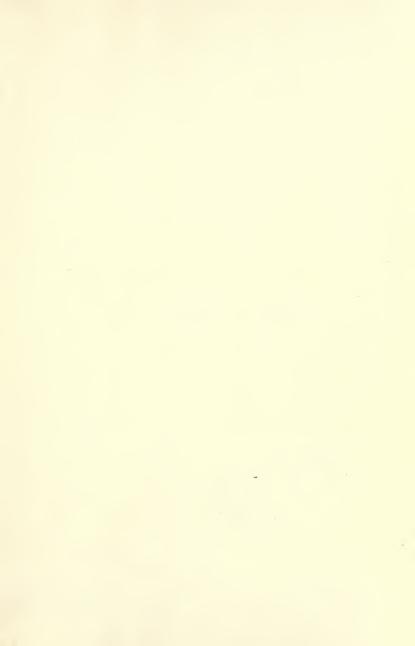


# LIBRARY UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA DAVIS

Africa Letter











MRS. FLETCHER WEBSTER JEWELL

# Muriel Sterling

A TALE OF THE AFRICAN VELDT

By

MRS. FLETCHER WEBSTER JEWELL



NEW YORK

International Book and Publishing Company

LIBRARY UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA DAVIS COPYRIGHT, 1900 By A. IRENE JEWELL

All rights reserved

# INTRODUCTION.

By the Hon. PATRICK A. COLLINS, LATE United STATES CONSUL AT LONDON.

RECENT events, tragic and deplorable, have centred the world's gaze upon South Africa. Whatever be the outcome of the present unhappy contest, the country, its people, institutions, and characteristics, will now be as well known as Central Europe. But a very short time ago it was practically less familiar to most readers than was Central Africa, the heart of the dark continent, for upon the latter the lights of Du Chaillu, Livingstone, and Stanley had been flashed. I shared the common knowledge and general ignorance about the South, until one long pleasant afternoon in London I got my first true glimpse of the land, its people—or rather peoples—and the cloud that was forming over them, and which has since burst in fury. It was in May, 1896, and in

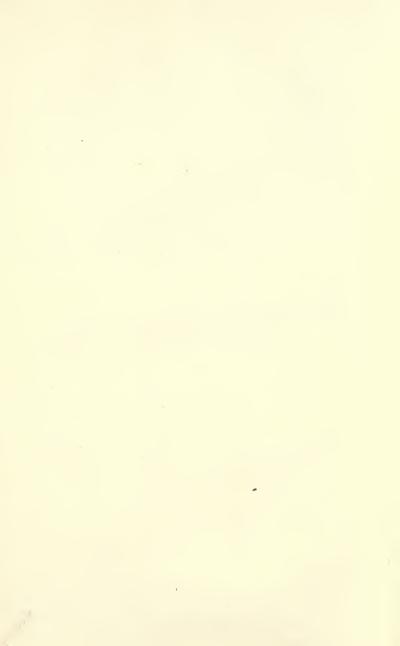
#### INTRODUCTION.

the old city palace of Richard III., now no longer dedicated to plots and conspiracies, but given over to eating and drinking-apparently the chief occupation of the denizens of the world's great metropolis. Our little party consisted of the author of this book, her husband, a distinguished member of the Transvaal Volksraad, and myself. Mrs. Jewell had accompanied her husband to South Africa, where he engaged in business, and lived in Johannesburg, the magic city, that so suddenly rose on the wonderful ridge of gold. Needless to say, as true Americans, they lived, and acted, and thought in the best currents that ran through the republic and its neighbors, through the little capital an hour's ride away by rail as well as in the alien golden city. The wounded men of Jameson's band and of the Boer commandos that checked the famous raid were brought to Krugersdorp, where a field hospital was established, and where Mrs. Jewell, first in the field, acted as nurse. Shortly after, Mr. and Mrs. Jewell came to the United States, returning to South Africa by way of London, and were just on the eve of departure on the May day mentioned, bearing the great

#### INTRODUCTION.

petition from America to President Kruger to spare the forfeited life of John Hays Hammond. The story opens just before the raid, and ends in good time happily, as all good stories do. Many of the facts through which the love story runs were mentioned in my presence in old Crosby Hall, and may be taken to be not only true, but accurately reported, as some true facts are not. It may be added also that the love story itself has fact for a foundation. As a compatriot of the fair author I most heartily bid Godspeed to her contribution to the literature of South Africa.

PATRICK A. COLLINS.



# CHAPTER I.

It was the last day of the Johannesburg races; the time, December 28, 1895. The vast throng at the race track was on a very tiptoe of enjoyment. Despite an accident to the starting machine, the different events were being run off with comparative smoothness, and now the horses were at it.

A blare of music and a burst of applause announced another contest for superiority.

"Lammas! Lammas!" shouted fair women, rising in their seats to wave their handkerchiefs at the doughty animal of that name, who was making a gallant struggle to retain the slight lead he had gained.

"Lammas! Lammas!" the echo went, a wave

of sound, gathering strength as it proceeded from the select hundreds on the grand stand of the Turf Club, down through the thousands, who, less fortunate, were obliged to content themselves with seats on the general stands, until it faded away into nothingness after passing through the throng, in carriages and on foot, who hugged the fenced enclosure of the track itself.

"No! no!" came a contradictory return echo. "See that little fellow in the green and yellow! Watch him forge ahead. Yah! Yah! Go in and win!"

"Lammas! Lammas!" burst forth the supporters of the favorite as he regained the ground he had lost and pushed his nose again to the front.

And Lammas it was. Then the crowd resumed their seats to rest from the fatigue brought on by each burst of excitement, and to buzz with query, criticism or comment.

The Christmas races are the greatest episodes in Johannesburg, and the Johannesburg races, it may be parenthetically remarked, are the greatest in all South Africa. The races at Cape Town,

Durban and Pretoria are magnificent events in their way, but those at Johannesburg are fairly magnetic. The scene is the English Derby or the American Futurity—on a somewhat smaller scale, perhaps—but supplying in animation and interest what it lacks in point of numbers. While they are on, business becomes a side issue, and receives only such attention as is absolutely demanded. The race track, situated on a broad plain on the outskirts of the city, becomes a marvellous panorama of life and color. The magnificent costumes of the ladies, the white umbrellas of the bookmakers, and the gay colors of the jockeys form a kaleidoscopic combination accentuated by the brilliancy of the sunshine and the clearness of the atmosphere in that part of the world.

A buzz of unusual interest went about the Turf Club balcony as a bright-colored brake, drawn by four beautiful bay horses, was driven on the grounds, and a jolly party of ladies and gentlemen alighted.

"Who are the strangers with Mrs. Brunelle?" asked one of the ladies on the stand, leaning over and nudging a neighbor.

"Why, don't you know?" asked the other, delighted at the opportunity and the ability to supply the desired information. "Well, there is Lord and Lady Stanmore, Lord Popham, Miss Dare and Miss St. John and Miss Sterling, a Mr. Weiss, and——"

"Why, that's Mr. Kooste with them, is it not?"

"Yes, Kooste is quite interested in one of the young ladies. Stopped a runaway for her recently."

"Indeed! I have quite lost track of events while at Cape Town."

"Oh, yes; Kooste is a sort of a fidus Achates since then! The fact that he is a Boer and that there are rumors of trouble in the air makes no difference. Lady Stanmore brought her friends down here for the purpose of seeing the country, enjoying the holidays, and getting away from England during the cold weather."

Meanwhile the newcomers had taken luncheon at the club, and had come out on the grand stand, where they became the objects on which hundreds of inquiring eyes were focussed.

"What a beautiful scene!" ejaculated Lady Stanmore, as she viewed the picture spread out before her gaze—the magnificently dressed throng about her, the track lying almost at her feet, the excited thousands in the immediate perspective, and the brilliant background, miles and miles away, where the bright sunshine and the clear atmosphere seemed to combine into a vibrating glitter.

"Enchanting!" echoed Miss St. John in ecstatic appreciation.

"Ya-as, never would have imagined such a sight in this out-of-the-way corner of the world, y' know," chimed in Lord Popham, for the moment roused out of his habitual air of ennui, and adjusting his monocle so as to take a fresh squint at the scene.

"It is indeed charming," continued Miss St. John. "See the sun! It looks like a great golden ball slowly sinking into a cave behind the hills yonder."

"Let's go look for dat ball. Ve ought to make our fortunes mit him melted up as olt golt, eh?" chuckled Mr. Weiss, elated at his practical romanticism. Mr. Weiss was realistic even in romance.

He had made some millions out of a capital of racial shrewdness and energy. Some said this capital consisted in part, at least, of more shady material—but that's another story. The fact of his millions overshadowed any possible fictions regarding the methods by which they were acquired, and he found them desirable stepping-stones to various social eminences. Lord Stanmore had invited him because of obligations in a business sense, which would not permit the casual brushing aside of the broad hint which induced the invitation. It must be added, however, that Mr. Weiss, with all his faults, was an entertaining travelling companion, although not always aware of the fact.

Muriel Sterling, the remaining member of Lady Stanmore's party, had expressed no opinion regarding the beauties of the scene spread out before her gaze, although she was not blind to their charms.

"Yes, this is typical of the place," Kooste was saying. "The money comes quickly and goes as quickly. The spirit of adventure and speculation pervades this, as it does everything else. Now

watch this heat," he added. "It is a decisive one."

The buzz in conversation ceased as the horses pranced about the starting-point, their riders jockeying for position, and rose to another burst of applause as the rival horses finally darted off.

"See the bookmakers!" he said, pointing to the bobbing white umbrellas under which busy men were taking notes of bets offered. "They do business out there in the open, notwithstanding other forms of gambling are reproved. The proceeding is countenanced by the government—yes, it is even invited, because it is a source of profit. That is one of the accompaniments of the race track.

"And there is another," he added, pointing to a low, long building of corrugated iron which occupied a prominent position within the grounds. "See the stream going into that place? Well, that is a totalizator, of which you may have heard—a sort of a gigantic pool. That is another form of betting—a monopoly legalized by the government for a consideration. The women are as eager to gamble as the men; in fact, I am not

sure but they are the most enthusiastic plungers. There, the race is over. Now come the patrons of the totalizator to gather in the results of their luck. The bookmakers will not settle here. They will meet later at Tattersall's, a sort of a clearing-house for bets, where the unlucky ones will cash in and the lucky ones will receive the results of their ventures."

Kooste was the special mentor of Miss Sterling. This fact, in addition to his presence with the party, had caused comment, although the one explained the other. There was some association of Outlanders and Boers in the city, but during the strained period of the few months preceding the opening of this story the lines had been drawn so sharply as to indicate with terrible distinctness the racial limitations. Kooste was a man of standing and education, however, and commanded the respect of the Outlanders. He had a large farm at Potchefstroom, but he spent a great deal of his time at Johannesburg, where he had established large commercial interests. Like most of his countrymen he was a notable horseman, and one morning, a few days before, he had rescued

Lady Stanmore and Muriel from a dangerous predicament. Out of this accidental acquaintance had grown a warm friendship.

The two ladies had started out for a short drive, and, with all the enthusiasm and self-reliance of adventurous Englishwomen, declined an escort, notwithstanding the fact that their light cart was drawn by a spirited pony. For the first few miles they revelled in unalloyed enjoyment. Lady Stanmore was an excellent whip, and all went well until——

She never was able to tell exactly how it happened, but in a moment her pony, startled at a piece of paper which the breeze whisked in front of its feet, shied, dashed from the road, and raced across the country with a speed born of a terror which Lady Stanmore found herself powerless to subdue. The two women became panic-stricken as the affrighted animal dashed on, and it required their best efforts to retain their seats in the plunging, jolting cart. Suddenly something whisked past them. A moment later the speed of the pony was checked, and he was brought up on his haunches on the brink of one of the dan-

gerous spruits, or ground crevices, with which the country abounds, and into which they would in all probability have been pitched headlong but for the assistance so providentially rendered.

"I trust that you are not injured, ladies," said a deep voice at the pony's head. Their rescuer had dismounted from his own animal, and stood with one hand on the pony's bridle, while with the other he patted its glistening neck in order to reassure the frightened beast. Meanwhile the two women were trying to recover from their fright, and found the reaction almost as overpowering as the danger itself. Muriel was the first to recover her voice.

"No; thanks to you, we have sustained no more injury than a severe fright. Oh, dear! I have hardly strength to alight."

"Nor have I," gasped Lady Stanmore. "Oh, how can we ever thank you for your assistance?" she continued, gradually getting control of her feeling from a point where she had been on the verge of hysterics. "But for you we should have been killed," she added, covering her face with

her hands, as if to shut out from her gaze the picture of that dreadful possibility.

"I beg that you will think no more of it," returned the stranger. "If I have been of service to you I am grateful for the privilege."

Then he softly lectured the pony while the two women gradually regained their composure.

"There!" he said, after a few moments had passed. "The pony seems quite tractable now. Would you dare drive him again, or can I assist you back to the town?"

"Yes, I'll drive him again," said Lady Stanmore, seizing the reins with grim determination, and mounting to the seat she had so recently vacated. "Nasty little beast! He caught me off my guard, or he never would have got away with us."

"Then I'll surrender him to you and bid you 'good-morning'—unless I can be of further service to you."

"But you will at least let us know to whom we are indebted for this great service," insisted Muriel, running forward as if the stranger were about to depart as suddenly as he had come. "We are

so frightened that really we are acting like savages. We feel under an extreme obligation to you. A minute more and it meant broken bones, and perhaps our lives. I hope that you do not regard us as unmindful of that fact, but we are so agitated that the recollection of our danger crowds every other idea out of our heads."

"Oh, you exaggerate the importance of my slight assistance!" the stranger modestly replied. "I would not have you feel that you are under any obligation on that account. I assure you that the privilege of having been of assistance to you is sufficient compensation. I may introduce myself as Jan Kooste, however. I was enjoying a ride before going to business when I saw your pony bolt. I noticed that he had the bit in his teeth, and I knew that there was danger if he persisted in his crosscountry run. Now, if you have decided to return to the city, it would give me great pleasure to escort you, if I may be permitted."

"We should be delighted to have you," replied both women in a breath.

"We may need your assistance again," added

Lady Stanmore, with a nervous laugh. "But if he gets away from me again, it will be for some other reason than careless driving." And she gripped the reins and braced herself in the cart to emphasize her new determination. Kooste led the pony by the bridle while retracing the course to the main road, and then, surrendering him to the guidance of Lady Stanmore, rode alongside the carriage. As they progressed, Muriel found herself scrutinizing the appearance of their rescuer. He had the dress and manners of a gentlemen, and he was a Boer, judging from this introduction. His name furnished a basis for that assumption, and found additional confirmation in the tall, muscular figure, crowned by a firmly set head and a somewhat heavy Dutch face.

A pair of expressive gray eyes lighted up the otherwise immobile countenance. There was a sturdy strength and self-reliant manliness in his every movement, and although it was clear that he inherited many of the characteristics of his Dutch forefathers, it was also clear that education and opportunities for travel, building on a solid basis of honest living, had dissipated many of the nar-

row prejudices of his race and produced a type of which any nation might be proud.

At the gate of Mrs. Brunelle's residence he left them, and proceeded on his way to "The Chains," but not until he had received an intimation that his presence as a caller would be more than agreeable, and had promised to accept the invitation so cordially extended. Little did Muriel dream that this chance acquaintance would lead them both, as actors, into one of the most dramatic episodes of the century; but the ways of an inscrutable Providence sometimes evolve heroes and heroines out of very modest and retiring material, and transform apparently insignificant events into epochs which change the whole course of empire.

And here on the grand-stand, although neither realized it, the prologue was about to be played.

# CHAPTER II.

"IF you find this gold, Mr. Weiss, I hope it will be beyond the borders of the Transvaal," remarked Kooste, replying in an aside to the former's expressed wish.

"Vy so?" queried Mr. Weiss.

"Because gold has been to the Transvaal more of a curse than a blessing."

"A curse!" Weiss echoed. "Vy, vhere vould ve pe to-day but for id? Not at dis race, cert'nly. An' vhere vouldt your city of Yohannesburg pe? Vy, novhere. Is it not so?"

"Well, if you think this race track and Johannesburg the sublimest things in creation, I grant
that my remark loses force," replied Kooste, with
a dry smile. "But I still think the discovery of
gold in this country to have been a curse to it.
Our predecessors were wise beyond their generation when they paid the original discoverer a
liberal bonus to leave the country and never men-

tion his discovery. It was not that they wanted the gold, but they knew the troubles it would bring, and they preferred to have it remain in the ground, rather than to run the risks that would be entailed by an influx of fortune hunters."

"But how has it been a curse?" asked Muriel. "From all that I have heard it has done a great deal to develop the place. I know it is said that money is the root of all evil, but still, we all realize that it is productive of a great deal of good."

"Granted," replied Kooste. "I did not say that it was altogether a curse. You will remember that I applied my remarks to the Transvaal, and limited them to the statement that so far as this country is concerned I regard the discovery of gold more of a curse than a blessing."

"But how?" persisted Muriel.

"Well, in many ways," he answered. "I did not mean to open up a discussion on this point when I made the remark, but since you press me for a reason, I don't mind answering you. It has made the Boers dissatisfied with their own condition. It has attracted a horde of foreigners, many

of them honorable men and women, to be sure, but many more of whom as much cannot be said. You say they have developed Johannesburg. True. But has that been simply a philanthropic idea? Don't these very men send out of the country a hundred times as much as they leave in it? Few come here for the purpose of settling. Permanent residents who were willing to make this country their country, and to bring up their children as its citizens, we would welcome. But few come here to settle. They want to make their fortunes in a hurry and then depart. If the gold should fail they would abandon the place with as little concern as one throws away a cigar stump. In the mean time, their pursuit of pounds, shillings and pence causes them to overlook many of the considerations of right and justice."

"Supposing the Outlanders had never come to Johannesburg, how much would it have amounted to?" asked Mr. Brunelle, attracted by the general discussion of this topic.

"Very little; there is no doubt of that," answered Kooste. "And yet, Mr. Brunelle, you and I know that there is a side to Johannesburg that

would have been better had some of these people never come."

"Oh, that is undoubtedly true if one is to consider details and overlook the broad general question. You cite only one side, and that the disagreeable side. The same objections might be brought against any city. In fact, I think there are few cities of such proportionately rapid growth as Johannesburg which are so well conducted. Why don't you mention the bright side of the picture?—the splendid public buildings, which are the results of the genius of the Outlanders and of the taxes which they pay, without being permitted a word as to how these taxes shall be expended. Yet the Boers control every public office, and insist that the government shall be conducted on a basis that was passé a hundred years ago. You also put restrictions on religion and education which no man can submit to without irritation and which makes your so-called republic a mockery."

"There is force in some of the points you have raised, Mr. Brunelle," replied Kooste, "but let me ask you this: Suppose the existence of gold in England should attract a lot of Boers, Frenchmen,

Germans, and Americans, and they should express dissatisfaction with the existing methods of government, after building a city in which they constituted a large majority, what would your countrymen do? Invite them to leave, if they didn't like it, wouldn't they?"

"Quite likely. But you have been in England and you know that the conditions are not parallel, and that the situation you have pictured is not a probable one. You would not find such harsh governmental conditions there, nor such wholesale corruption."

"There can be no corruption without a corruptor. It takes two to make such a bargain."

"That may all be. But you know that some of your politicians, without any advances from outsiders, are constantly scheming to divert franchises for their own personal benefit?"

"Ah, but the advances generally do come from outsiders, Mr. Brunelle! That is where the difficulty lies. And you should not be too hard on a poor farmer elected to the Volksraad, who yields his little vote when offered a sum of money so large that his previous comprehension could

never realize that so much existed in one place. Now if the Outlanders are really sincere in their desire to take a part in the government of the country, for the good of the country, why don't they take advantage of the laws which permit them to become citizens?"

"But that law is purposely framed to obstruct that possibility."

"I beg your pardon, but I think you misconstrue it."

"Why, hasn't the residential requirement been extended from two to fourteen years within my memory?"

"Yes, but surely a man should become acclimated before he is allowed to become a citizen. The United States, with its immense native population, and which is constantly receiving an immigration population which intends to remain permanently in the country, requires a five years' residence, and is talking of increasing even that."

"But does the United States require the consent of its native population to the granting of citizenship to a newcomer, and does it dictate to him any special form of church belief or practice

before it will permit that citizen to become a part of the government?"

"No; but it does require that a citizen shall forswear allegiance to any other government, and that is just what the Outlanders here, particularly the English, decline to do. They want to occupy the dual position of citizens of the South African Republic and subjects of the Oueen. The result would be that one of these days they would, by mere force of voting numbers, move to transform this country to a dominion of Great Britain. That is what we fear, Mr. Brunelle, and even as an Englishman you cannot deny that there is some ground for that fear. No government is absolutely perfect, and I am free to admit that ours is a long way from perfection. I realize the justice of some of your objections, but you know that some of us are working, even now, to soften some of these conditions. In the end I think we shall succeed; but it will take time, because it is difficult to bring about radical changes in the minds of people who think slowly, whose environment has had a tendency to narrow rather than to broaden, and whose memory is filled with certain

fears, which are not entirely baseless. I do not mean to have my remarks taken in a personal sense. If you, on the one hand, and I on the other, had the power to effect a reconstruction, I believe we could do so on a basis that would be absolutely satisfactory."

"I believe you, Kooste, I believe you," was Brunelle's hearty rejoinder. "Of course you understand that I wasn't addressing you in any personal sense, and I agree with you that if the hotheads on both sides could be subdued, a reasonable reconstruction could be effected and much of the present friction avoided. I still think, however, that we have substantial ground for complaint, and the difficulty is that these complaints, however well founded, seem to fall upon deaf ears, so far as the government is concerned."

"Gentlemen, here is the best race of the day," broke in Miss Dare, who had no interest in a political discussion and feared its growing warmth. "I propose a pool on it. Do you all agree?"

They did, with a vengeance.

"Then what say you to a pound apiece? I'll take Languid."

"Oh, you're selecting the favorite!" objected Mrs. Brunelle.

"But they tell me that Forest King has been pushing him close on the circuit. I'd just as soon take Forest King."

"No, no. You had first choice. You take Languid. Some of the others may select Forest King."

"I'll hold the stakes and call a bookie," suggested Mr. Brunelle.

"No, no. Let us put it in the totalizator. It will be more exciting, and we won't have to wait for a settlement. You take the money down to the totalizator, Mr. Brunelle," suggested Miss Dare.

Mr. Brunelle complied with the request and then resumed his seat to watch the great race. The riders cantered around the starting-point for a few moments. Finally the word was given, and off they went—a whirlwind of shouting, whipping Centaurs. As they tore over the course they were encouraged by the shouts of their favor-

ites and pandemonium reigned. A final shout, a lashing of whips, a cheer, and the race was over.

"I've won," shrieked Miss Dare in her delight. Then the spoils were divided.

During the progress of the race Kooste had been called away from the group on the grand stand, but he soon returned and beckoned Mr. Brunelle aside.

"I've got bad news," he whispered. "I fear that there is to be a sudden sequel to our remarks of this afternoon. I wish the matter to be considered confidential, so far as possible, but I feel that I owe it to you and my other friends here to warn you of danger. The fact is, I've just been commandeered."

"Good God! is that so?" asked Brunelle, turning pale.

"Yes; the field cornet has just sent a messenger for me with orders to report at once. I have seen several other Boers summoned also."

"What is the difficulty?"

"There is a suspicion of an uprising of the Outlanders. The Boers are excited because of their attitude regarding the demand they have

sent to the President, and the government has information that a plot is ready to develop in Johannesburg. For God's sake, leave the place at once. I would not be surprised to hear at any moment an order for its bombardment, for information has come that the residents are secretly arming and mean to try and overturn the government. Go now, while it is possible, and urge your friends to start without delay. There is no time to lose. See," he added, pointing to the groups rising here and there about the race track, "the secret is already known. The presence of the messenger has attracted their attention, and hundreds who have surmised the reason for his presence are leaving the track."

His remarks received substantial confirmation. Men were hastily notifying women, and little groups were departing for their carriages. The excitement increased until it extended to the entire assemblage. The interest in the races was lost. The impulse of everybody seemed to be to leave with the least possible delay.

"I'll excuse myself to my friends without telling them the whole truth," Kooste continued. "I

do not want needlessly to frighten them. But I will depend on you to see that they lose no time in getting away from here and leaving the country, for a while, at least. No one can tell the extent of the danger. I will go down and arrange transportation for them by Monday's train, if you so desire. There will be a tremendous crush, but I think my influence will suffice to secure you accommodations. I'll try and see them again before they start. In the mean time, use your best endeavors to hasten their going. This is one of the blessings of gold," he bitterly added. "God only knows where this trouble is going to end; I hope the crisis may in some way be averted, but I fear the future."

The return from the race track was a panic rather than a procession. To reach the city with all possible haste was the thought uppermost in the minds of all, and the brushes on the road between the different outfits were entirely apart from the wish of individual drivers to exhibit the speed of their animals. A terrible dust storm had arisen, to add to the anxieties of the occasion, but in spite of it all plunged at a headlong speed.

28

Past the mines Mr. Brunelle's brake whirled; thence up Commissioner Street and past "The Chains," where now, instead of gesticulating brokers, excited men were discussing the one question which filled the popular mind; across Pritchard Street; past the Grand National Hotel, whose porticoed front was lined with angrybrowed Outlanders; past the railroad station and into Dornfontein, and thence up Saratoga Avenue to his residence Mr. Brunelle urged his panting horses. The threat of impending conflict was visible on every hand. When would it become a reality?

# CHAPTER III.

"Not going, Muriel?" echoed Lady Stanmore, the following morning, when she had visited Muriel's room, in response to the latter's invitation. "Not going? Why, you're crazy."

"At any rate, I'm determined to stay, dear Lady Stanmore. My mind is fully made up."

"But, my dear child, you don't realize what you are doing. You must go."

"No, I cannot," replied Muriel, enfolding Lady Stanmore in her arms as if coaxing her permission to remain. "I have carefully considered the matter. Until last evening I was undecided, but now my determination is fixed. So I sent for you to notify you. Now, listen, dear friend, and let me tell you the whole story. You alone, of all my friends, know the purpose I had in mind in coming out here. You have been my confidant—my other self. All my hopes and plans I have

confided in you. Don't think me ungrateful. Vour kindnesses never came home to me so clearly as they do this moment. They pile up, a mountain so high that my gratitude can never hope to scale it. I know that when you urge me to return with you, you are advising what seems to be the only thing to do, but listen: I came out here for a purpose, and I feel that I ought to try and carry it out. Last night, after we had returned from the races, I slipped out to the little chapel to pray for guidance. For more than an hour I was there in the gloom, asking for light. Never in my life did I so pour out my soul, and never did I hear so clear a response. When I left the chapel it was with the determination to stay here."

"But where will you stay?" excitedly demanded Lady Stanmore, as if that clinched her argument. "The Brunelles are going."

"I have provided for all that," was Muriel's calm counter response. "Leaving the chapel, I met the rector and told him of my plans. He at first tried to dissuade me, but after hearing my entire statement he approved of my course, and

told me he would welcome me at his house until such time as I could begin work as a nurse."

"As a nurse? You?"

"Yes; even I."

"Why, child, what do you know about nursing?"

"Not much, perhaps; and yet I am not altogether ignorant. In my little philanthropic jaunts I have devoted considerable attention to charitable work and have observed the nurses at the hospitals. I may lack a technical education, but I know something of such duties as do not require a technical knowledge of the science. I can at least smooth some poor fellow's pillow, and assist in preparing dressings."

"But where is this hospital, and when are you going to begin?"

"I can't answer either question; but this seems to be clear: that this place will be the centre of trouble, and that the time is not far distant. There is talk of war on everybody's lips. Besides, if Jack is anywhere in the country I may hear news of him. I have learned that he has gone up into Rhodesia. It would be just like him to take part in a contest, if there should be

one. By staying here I may get news of him, or even see him."

"But what shall I say to your father? He will hold me responsible for you."

"Tell him the whole story, if you choose. Say to him that you did all you could to persuade me to return, and that I was determined to remain, for my country's sake. Say to him that I believe it to be my duty, and he will understand."

"Dear child, how you argue! I am almost persuaded to stay with you. You make me feel like a coward to think of going."

"No, no, no!" remonstrated Muriel. "Your duty is to go, and without delay."

"Yes, I fear I must. But, Muriel," she added, holding the girl at arm's length, and gazing at her with glistening eyes, "I can hardly make myself believe that you are in earnest. Where did you get this courage?"

"Ah, I hardly know!" Muriel wearily responded. "It seems as if I had grown from a girl to a woman during the night. The only thing that seems quite clear is that I am doing what is right—yes, what is my duty."

"Well, dear, so be it. Under such circumstances I cannot say another word to dissuade you. I am proud of you—proud of you."

And the good-hearted little woman folded the girl to her breast and kissed her.

"I knew you would agree with me. Now, say nothing to the others until to-morrow. I know they would also try and persuade me to go. My determination must be final and absolute."

"Very well, dear. Now, good-night. I'll see you in the morning."

Naturally there was a great commotion among the members of Lady Stanmore's party, when the announcement of Muriel's determination was made. Lord Stanmore said nothing, except to privately inform his wife that he deemed the move an unwise one. But as he agreed with his wife in all things, he accepted her view of the situation and finally applauded Muriel's courage.

"Weally, it's most extwaordinawy, don't y' know," drawled Lord Popham, as the boldness of the plan gradually worked its way through his dull perception. "Extwaordinawy! Stay here? Deah me!" Then he tugged at his mustache,

first with his right hand and then with his left, as if this process assisted his mental digestion.

"But, Muriel, you may be killed!" apprehensively whispered Miss St. John; and she shuddered at the bare thought.

"You are hardly comforting," smiled Muriel.
"But even so. I have thought of that, and, if necessary, I am ready to die in a cause that seems to me so glorious."

"I suppose you'll wear a gray dress, with a white apron, a little white cap, and a red cross on your sleeve, won't you? Won't that be just lovely?" murmured the romantic Miss St. John.

"Really, I hadn't thought of all those details," replied Muriel, laughing aloud at the queer turn of her companion's thoughts. "And yet, it's a matter worth considering. I'm glad you suggested the idea. I have no dresses really suitable to wear on such occasions and I'll have to go out immediately and get some, or the materials for some."

"Perhaps you'd like a costume like dat," put in Mr. Weiss mischievously, addressing Miss St. John.

"Oh, dear, no!" that romantic young lady answered, shrinking behind Lady Stanmore as if she feared some one would by main force compel her to enlist her services. "I never could do it. I'd faint at the very sight of blood."

"Miss Sterling, much as I admire your courage, I wish you would reconsider," gravely urged Mr. Brunelle. "You have no conception of the possibilities which may ensue. There are not only the privations of a hospital, and the possibility of being wounded or killed during a bombardment to be considered, but there is also the likelihood of an uprising of the blacks, with all the horrible possibilities of such a catastrophe. I beseech you, do not expose yourself to a danger of which I dare not more than hint."

Muriel closed her eyes and drew herself to her full height. Her hands were clinched by her side, the color receded from her lips, and for a moment she seemed to cease breathing. But there was no sign of faltering in her clear gray orbs when she again opened them.

"That was something which I had not considered," she replied, in her soft, even tones. "But

even if it actually threatened, instead of being a mere possibility, I would still persist in the course I have marked out for myself. As I have already told you, there are many things concerning this venture which are not entirely clear to me, but I have placed my trust in the Lord, and I know He will illumine my path."

"Then I have nothing more to say. I admire your devotion, and I would myself stay but for my wife and children. I feel that my first duty is to them. But I felt that I ought to present to you the possibility which was worrying me, and now that you have considered it, I congratulate you upon your determination. I am proud to own you as a countrywoman, and I trust the fears which now disturb us all shall be shown to have no better foundation than our own imaginations."

"I thank you all. Believe me, I appreciate your friendly anxiety, but, as I have told you, I have committed the details of my plan to a Higher Power, and beyond the mere fact that I ought to stay, I have decided nothing. I will ride with you to the station and there say farewell."

As they drove through the streets they found

themselves in the midst of a mass of hurrying fugitives. All kinds of bundles were being carried. Trunks were conspicuous by their absence. Travelling bags or cases predominated, and in some instances effects were packed in sheets or tablecloths. A drunken miner waved his hat at them as they passed. Farther along a squad of armed volunteers caused a brief halt while they marched across the square. At the little railroad station it was confusion worse confounded. The approaches were blocked by a struggling mob, and it was with difficulty that the members of the party squeezed their way to the coaches. Here the seriousness of the situation was again accentuated. At the window of one of the coaches a man was standing, handing a woman in the coach some bread, meat and coffee.

"I dare not leave here to go out," she was saying. "I might lose my seat. But, oh, I'm so tired! Here I've been cramped up since morning. I wonder if they'll never leave."

A little farther along, the foremost members of the party were almost upset by a commotion immediately in front of them.

"Hammer him! Hammer him hard, the cur!" a crowd of miners were urging, as they strove to strike a hapless mortal who was rolling in the dust. "Ah, ye coward! Ye'd sneak off like a whipped cur, would ye, as soon as ye scent danger. How about all your brave words, now?" they asked, as they gave him a final series of kicks and the half-dead individual, by a wild dash, managed to escape from them and disappear in the crowd.

"What has he done?" asked some one.

"Wot's he done? Wot 'asn't he done?" they asked. "W'y, 'e was all for war, an' blood, an' gore. This mornin' we missed 'im, an' some one saw 'im comin' this way. So we follored, an' 'ere we fin' 'im, curled up under a seat like the dog 'e is."

An angry roar from the opposite side of the railroad yard attracted the attention of the crowd. It was followed by a volley of stones and other missiles.

"What's the row there?" asked some one in the crowd, nearly sweeping the Stanmore party from their feet as the rush to the other side of the station set the whole throng in motion.

"Not much," was the jocular reply of a spectator.

"Only a lot of white-livered chaps, who are trying to get away from the place by packing themselves in a cattle car. They're jammed in so close that there isn't room for them to move around, and they're obliged to stand up. How they'll endure it during the long ride the Lord only knows, and he won't tell. The miners are mad at them for leaving the city, now that danger threatens, and they are showing their displeasure."

So the scene changed from one act of violence to another. Accommodations on the trains were at a tremendous premium. In some cases as high as £20 was given a guard to hold a single seat. Despite the fact that the cars were packed to a dangerous limit, it seemed as if each succeeding train-load made a scarcely perceptible diminution of the mass of humanity that thronged the station, imploring, threatening, cursing; all battling for the privilege of a chance to get away—anywhere, so long as it was beyond the limits of Johannesburg, and into territory where the British flag floated.

"Where in the world is our coach?" Mr. Bru-

nelle asked, somewhat testily, after he had walked almost the entire length of the station.

"Right here," remarked a voice at his elbow, and turning he beheld Kooste. He led them to a vacant compartment, and assisted them to deposit their luggage.

"I had this place reserved for you," he said; "and as I felt I could not permit my good friends to depart without a word of farewell, I secured permission to come down here. I am glad you have been so expeditious. The danger is imminent, although it is not more apparent than it was on Saturday. The cloud may break at any moment and it is best that you are taking an early start. It is the part of wisdom not to unnecessarily expose yourselves. There's the starting signal. Farewell, and God bless you all."

"Kooste, we are under an eternal obligation to you," replied Mr. Brunelle, taking the other's hand. "But for you I doubt if we could have found accommodations."

"Pshaw! the service is not worth such praise," he answered. "It is nothing at all. Should anything happen, think kindly of me."

"Indeed we cannot do otherwise," came the hearty chorus.

"Don't delay, Miss Sterling. The starting signal has sounded, and the train will depart at any moment," cautioned Kooste, noticing that Muriel, instead of entering the coach, was standing on the platform, and conversing with her friends inside.

"I'm not going, Mr. Kooste," she quietly replied.

"Not going?" he echoed. "To-day, you mean?"

"Not at all," she answered, her eyes on the ground, but a determined ring in her voice.

"Not at all?" he repeated, as if convincing himself that he had not heard aright. "But you must," he added, almost pushing her into the coach in his anxiety. "For God's sake, what does this mean?" he asked, appealing to Mr. Brunelle, when she resisted his efforts to induce her to depart.

"It means that Miss Sterling has made up her mind to remain and serve as a nurse. We have tried to persuade her to accompany us, but she is steadfast in her determination to stay, and she has made us believe that she is doing right."

"A nurse?" repeated Kooste, gazing in wonderment at the girl. His brain reeled with the rapidity of the thoughts that were whirling within him. He gazed in mute wonder from Muriel to the party in the coach, and before he could clearly grasp the idea that she had decided to remain behind, the engine had given a parting shriek, the long, heavy train had slowly rumbled out of the station, and they were left alone on the platform. Muriel waved her handkerchief in reply to the farewells of her friends until a curve in the road took them from sight. Then she turned to Kooste, who still gazed stupidly at her.

"Yes, a nurse," she continued, as if in response to his mute query. "If there is war there will be need for women. I am ready to do my part, however humble it may be."

She spoke a little defiantly, as if construing his silence into a mute remonstrance.

"I have only profound admiration to express for your courage," he apologetically found tongue to say. "I was neither scolding you nor belittling your devotion, but the idea you proposed was so magnificent, that I could hardly grasp it, at first."

"Couldn't you concede so much to an Englishwoman?" she asked with a wan smile.

"Ah, don't jest!" he sadly replied. "There is one Englishwoman for whom I have had only the sincerest admiration since it was my privilege to know her. If this were the time and the place I would gladly lay at her feet myself and all that I possess as a proof of my devotion. I may say that I am delighted beyond all power of expression at her decision to remain here. It will give me an opportunity of assisting her. May I not ask that privilege? Now that you are alone here, may I not take you to the home of one of my friends, where you will be safe from present danger, and most heartily welcomed?"

"No, no; I cannot accept your hospitality, nor that of your friends!" she answered, placing her hand on his sleeve as he drew back, offended at the quickness of her reply. "I appreciate the kindness you intend, but I have already arranged to remain at the rectory until such time as my services are needed."

"But where are you going to begin your labors?" he asked.

"Wherever I can be of any service," she replied.

"I have no definite plans. I suppose this place will be the scene of the conflict, if it comes, and here I will stay until I am called for."

"Will you help the Boers as well as the Outlanders?" he asked.

"What a question!" she replied, somewhat indignantly. "The cause of humanity knows no race distinctions."

"Pardon me, I did not mean it in that sense. But it is just possible that the scene of conflict may be miles away from here, and that the Boers may need your services rather than the Outlanders. In such a case would you be willing to respond to a call for service?"

"Wherever I can be of assistance, there I will be found, if you will come after me."

"Agreed," he answered. "Consider me your devoted servant."

"I consider you as a loyal and true friend," she answered. "While we are talking, there is another matter to which I ought to refer, and perhaps there will be no better opportunity than the present. While I feel flattered at the personal—

that is, the admiration you have expressed for me —I feel that I ought to tell you that one great reason for staying here is the hope of hearing from or seeing the man whom I love, and who I believe loves me. I feel honored at your declaration. I regard you as a very dear friend, whose addresses would be an honor to any woman, but in my case there is but one who occupies my heart. Just where that one is I do not know. I have heard that he was in Johannesburg and had started for Rhodesia. We parted under a misunderstanding, and I thought I might hear of him at this point. That is why I came to South Africa. If there is a war, I fear that he will be concerned in it, and I am afraid that he will be opposed to you. Such is fate. If by any chance you should meet him, I hope you will assist him, if he needs assistance, for my sake."

"That I will. What is his name?"

"John Derrington."

"John Derrington. I will not forget the name. I envy that man," added Kooste softly, "but I am none the less your friend, and, so far as my ability goes, I will assist you to find him."

"How can I ever thank you for all you have done for me?" she gratefully asked.

"By simply giving me the privilege of attesting my friendship," he replied. "There, have courage!" he added, as he left her at the rectory gate. "All will yet be well; to-night I must return to my home, but when the time comes for you to be of service, I will manage to send for you. Till then, farewell."

That night sleep refused to come to Muriel. For hours she sat at the window of her little room, gazing into a retrospect that stretched back through months of memory, over thousands of miles of sea and lands, and moistened each new vista with a benediction of tears.

# CHAPTER IV.

DAYLIGHT faded into dusk, and dusk, by a quick transition, became darkness, but still Muriel sat at the window of her room, her elbow resting on the sill, her chin on her hand, and her eyes gazing staringly into the quiet street. Events passing within her immediate sight and hearing had but little interest for her, however. Her thoughts were far away, and her gaze was fixed on the recesses of memory. Occasionally a smile would penetrate the mask of mournful thoughtfulness, as some happy incident of the past photographed itself upon her consciousness, but for the most part her dreams were sombre, and a tear was either on the surface or perilously near it. Once in a while a pistol-shot would recall her from the past to the present and cause her to remember that she was in Johannesburg and not in London. During the momentary start such explosions or the sound of

48

excited voices caused her, she would realize that she was in the midst of alarms, and a nervous shudder would pass over her. Anticipation is generally more terrible than reality. The shots were fired, she knew, by some exuberant miner giving vent to his emotions at some bit of sensational rumor from Jameson, whose name was on everybody's lips, or punctuating, in the rough way of some of the rough men of the country, a patriotic exhortation of a roadside orator. It was indeed fortunate for her that she had her dreams to occupy her mind, or the tension upon her nerves would have been almost unendurable.

In those few hours the scenes of a lifetime flitted again and again before her memory, as if in a moving panorama that turned, now this way and now that way, now advancing and now retreating, as one incident followed after another, regardless of sequence. This moment it was a scene from childhood; the next, one from budding womanhood; but ever it was the same background to the picture—the hills and vales of old England—and ever the same people—her countrymen and countrywomen. But there was one man who was con-

tinually in her thoughts, and one scene which presented itself again and again, like some accusing spectre. The man was Jack Derrington; the scene, that last garden fête at Lady Stanmore's. It seemed so long ago—a thing out of the misty past—and yet, reckoned by the calendar, it was only a little more than six short months.

"Why—why—did I persist in misunderstanding him?" she repeatedly asked herself, in unspoken words of abject contrition.

But she was not so much to blame as she persisted in now believing she was. She was no prophet to lift the veil of the future, and, peering beyond, to read the hand of destiny. She was simply a thoughtless girl, busily engaged in enjoying the pleasures of life, and content to accept the attentions lavished upon her as contributions to her own happiness. How could she have known that their little tiff, at that otherwise joyous garden fête, would have driven him to the opposite ends of the earth? And why had he not called to see her before she started on her summer tour of pleasure haunts at gay watering places? And why, also, had he maintained his sulky si-

lence during that summer? These were the questions she asked herself at the time. Now she understood, and was grieved; then it suited her coquettish spirit to retaliate by entering more than ever into the enjoyment of life, in order to punish him for his boorishness. And when she returned from the watering places, she promised herself that she would persist in adding to his misery by punishing him with endless flirtations, but when she did return—

The garden fête at Lady Stanmore's was the climax of the gay season in town. Her beautiful house and grounds were a picture from fairyland. Hundreds of gallant men and beautiful women whirled in the ballroom or strolled through the gaily decorated gardens. The gayest of the gay was Muriel. Jack was also there. This would have been an unnecessary declaration in their own set, provided it had been previously stated that Muriel was present. The presence of Jack followed as a matter of course. But the music, and the dancing, and the gay throngs seemed to awaken no responsive emotion in his bosom. He

contented himself, if his feelings can be described as those of contentment, by puffing away at a cigar on the veranda or occasionally listlessly watching the gay whirl in the ballroom from one of the doors of that giddy theatre of activity. His ears must have burned, too, at the frequency with which he became a topic of conversation.

"I declare I don't see just what his purpose in life is," declared one thin-lipped chaperon. "Here he is, a man of education and social standing, doing absolutely nothing to distinguish himself. I wouldn't mind," she added, by way of apologetic explanation, "if he were one day to become the master of Derrington Hall, but that is out of the question. His brother, who is only a few years older than Jack, has just succeeded to the title and estates, and as he promises to live to a ripe old age, as well as to have children of his own, Jack's chances of succession are not one in a million. Under those circumstances I don't understand why Jack doesn't do something for himself. He has a home at the Hall with his mother, but his income, while sufficient to maintain himself, is not large enough to permit him to main-

tain an establishment of his own, unless he chooses to throw himself upon his brother's charity. I imagine that this would be an uncomfortable matter, too, judging from what I hear about him," she added, lowering her voice and speaking with gossipy malice.

"Isn't it queer?" echoed one of her cronies, like herself more busily engaged in dissecting the reputations of their acquaintances than in any other proceeding. "Of course he couldn't go into trade, but he might at least enter the army or the diplomatic service. Surely his family and influence would guarantee him an opening in either of these directions."

"Oh, come, be a little more charitable, ladies!" put in old Captain Gray. "The boy is young yet."

"Young! Why, he's twenty-seven," they remonstrated.

"Well, what do you expect? Would you have us all Napoleons or Alexanders at twenty-seven?"

"But he ought to be doing something worthy of his family and education."

"How do you know he is not?"

"What is it then, if he is doing anything?"

"Oh, I don't know!" laughed the captain. "He hasn't made a confidant of me. Englishmen as a rule are conservative and slow to develop. But the growth is a gradual one and a good one. One of these days he may surprise you by achieving something worth while, and then you will applaud him as a wonder and assume that some master stroke was the impulse of a moment instead of the outcome of years of deliberation. Then you who now criticise would be the first to commend. Oh, deliver me from the judgments of women!" The captain laughed good-naturedly at his offended companions, and moved into the veranda to enjoy a smoke.

"Is that you, Jack?" he asked, peering into the gloom, out of which a glowing cigar signalled that a corner of the veranda held an occupant.

"Yes; won't you join me, captain?"

"Don't mind if I do," grunted the older man, drawing up a chair and tilting himself back against the wall. "You don't seem to care much for all this gayety?" he continued.

"Well, I'm not exactly carried away with it, as

you see," was the half-joking, half-serious response. "There is comfort in occasional solitude and a good cigar, and as a matter of choice I'd rather read a book than make a whirling dervish of myself."

"You're something of a philosopher, Jack."

Jack laughed outright, and nonchalantly blew a puff of cigar smoke into the air.

"I'm not able to make out whether it's philosophy or laziness," he responded. "I suppose its all a part of the great game of life."

"Life? Yes." The captain spoke slowly and reminiscently. Already he had begun to descend the westerly side of the hill. "Speaking of life, what is your purpose, Jack?"

"I wish I knew," Jack slowly responded.

"Haven't you any ideas—any plans? A young fellow like you ought not to be content to be simply a spectator of a great procession."

"Ideas? Yes; a plenty. Plans? No; that is, no definite ones. The fact of the matter is that until recently I never gave the subject a serious thought."

"Why not go into the army?"

Jack shrugged his shoulders. "I don't think I'd care for it," he replied, "that is, unless I could choose my own stations. There is nothing in an assignment to command a few niggers in Egypt or India that tends to charm my imagination. Besides, that requires a special education which I have too long neglected."

- "How about a diplomatic position?"
- "Again that is a matter of education."
- "Oh, not altogether," remonstrated the captain.
  "Your family and the influence you could command would easily find a post for you."
- "No, I thank you," was the quick retort. "I've seen too much of that. If I'm going to do anything, I'm going to do it myself. If there is to be anything done for me, it must be done because of merits of my own and not because of my family or friends."
  - "Hm! You're rather independent, I see?"
- "Decidedly so. No offence meant, captain. I appreciate your friendly suggestions, but, really, I couldn't go into the thing on that basis."
- "Well, good for you, boy! I've no doubt you will work out your own salvation. I admire your

stiff back. Hello!" he continued, as the sound of voices came to them, "here is somebody looking for you, I imagine—somebody whom you'd rather talk to than me. So, good-night."

"Oh, here you are!" said Muriel, pausing in front of him. "Dr. Wilson and I have been hunting all over the place for you. Why in the world do you hide yourself in this out-of-the-way corner, and have you forgotten that you asked me for this waltz?"

"Oh, I beg pardon! I didn't realize how rapidly time was flying; I was so interested in talking with the captain," Jack added, taking Muriel's arm, and relieving Dr. Wilson of his escort.

"You must have had an interesting subject," Muriel archly retorted.

<sup>&</sup>quot; I did."

<sup>&</sup>quot;What was it?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Myself."

<sup>&</sup>quot;Oh, you egotist!" she laughed. "You would be better employed enjoying the festivities of this occasion. Oh, I've had a glorious time!" she added.

<sup>&</sup>quot;I'm glad of that," he responded.

"No, you're not a bit glad," Muriel contradicted. "You speak like an automaton. If you're glad, why don't you show it?"

"Really, I am," he protested. "A fellow can't grin like a hyena all the time, you know. I'm sure my pleasure at your enjoyment is more than it would be at my own."

"What a queer fellow you are," she continued, looking curiously at him. "Sometimes I think I don't understand you at all."

"That's not surprising. I don't always understand myself."

"There is such a number of delightful people here to-night," she rattled on, pretending not to notice his mood, and thinking to divert his thoughts. "Lieutenant Wallace, for example. By the way, he tells me he is an old schoolmate of yours."

Jack nodded.

"He is just returned from Egypt," she continued, "and he showed me the medal he received for bravery."

"Yes; I had a little chat with him at the club," replied Jack. "He certainly has done well in the

short time he has been in the service. Now, do you know, at school he never gave promise of being anything out of the ordinary run," he asked, as if to justify his own lack of accomplishment.

"Well, he's quite a hero to-night," she continued. "And I do so love heroic men," she added, with a mischievous glance at Jack. "Then there's Dr. Houston, too, just back from an Antarctic exploring expedition. He's here to-night, the admired of all, and absolutely sharing the honors of being the lion of the evening with Lieutenant Wallace. Wasn't he at your school, too?"

"No—that is, he was graduated two or three years ahead of me. I knew him, however."

"He seems to have improved his opportunities, too," she continued apropos of nothing at all.

"That's as much as to say that I have not made the most of mine, I suppose," he commented, somewhat bitterly.

"I did not say that."

"No; but you inferred as much."

"Oh, you must let me be the interpreter of my own thoughts!" she replied, somewhat stiffly.

"Pardon me, Muriel," he pleaded. "I did not mean to offend you. But your remark struck a chord which has been reproaching me for some time. I feel that I have somehow let my opportunities slip by me, and that instead of riding after foxes or shooting, I should have been doing more substantial work. Some day I hope to be able to give a better account of myself."

"Jack, you're really getting quite heroic, yourself."

"Don't laugh. I'm in earnest," he remonstrated. "But what I need most is the support and sympathy of a good woman, and that woman I know."

"Oh, nonsense!" she replied, parrying the allusion. "Win the battles yourself. Then the glory will be all your own. Now there's Dr. Houston——

"Oh, hang Houston!" he broke in, impatiently.

"Mr. Derrington!"

"Again I ask your pardon, Muriel. But I'm so tired of hearing you sing that fellow's praises, and he follows you around like a shadow."

"Ha! ha!" she gayly laughed. "You can't

see shadows, Jack, you know, unless you stand between yourself and the light."

"But what I wanted to say was this: To ask you—to tell you——'

"Here comes Dr. Houston now. You must excuse me. I've promised him the next dance."

"But, Muriel, this is so important to me. I want to tell you that I——"

"No, no; not now!" she protested, waving away the detaining hand he laid upon her sleeve. "Dr. Houston is almost at hand."

Then Jack heard an echo of her smiling acquiescence to Dr. Houston's question, and the next moment she had swept away from him, on Houston's arm, waving a laughing "Ta! Ta!" at him as she departed. His gaze followed them until they were lost among the other dancers, and then he retired to his old corner of the veranda.

"She didn't want to hear me," he muttered. "That is the third time I have tried to tell her I love her, and each time she has put me off with some excuse. So a hero is her ideal. Well, it is evident that I am not one. Damn all heroes," he added, continuing his bitter soliloquy and

viciously kicking at a vine. "Most of them are stuffed with sawdust. They go off, do some trifling thing, and then come back here and pose. Ah, well! It is plain that my dreams were simply fancies. Heroes! Well, who can blame her? She's a woman, after all." For a few moments he stood in the gloom, impatiently tugging at his mustache, and then he broke out with: "By Gad, I'll do it. I may lose her forever, but then—bah! how can one lose what one never had? I'm a fool. What's the use of my closing my eyes to the facts. I'll do it."

## CHAPTER V.

- "PAT."
- "Yes, sur."
- "Can you pack up my traps so that I can leave here on Saturday?"
  - "Everything, sur?"
- "Yes, everything. That is, my guns and shooting togs, and my clothing. The rest of the kit I'll buy. And, Pat——"
  - "Yes, sur."
- "I'm going to leave the country—to South Africa, in fact. I may not need your services after Saturday."
- "Have I—have I done anything wrong, sur?" asked Pat, twirling a button of his jacket and timorously edging toward the table at which his master was seated.
- "Oh, bless you, no—not that!" said Jack, looking up at his faithful servitor and involuntarily smiling at the woe-begone appearance of the lat-

ter. "You've been a good servant, Pat. I'll be glad to recommend you. But the fact is, I expect to rough it for some months, at least, and I do not care to induce you to share the hardships I expect to encounter."

"An' would y' have me otherwise?" Pat eagerly asked.

"Gladly. But I have no right to even invite you to undergo the difficulties and face the dangers which I expect to meet."

"Then supposin' I invite myself, sur?"

"Do you mean it?"

"Do I mean it, sur?" Pat reproachfully repeated.

"Do I mean that when I think of all the kindnesses you have done me durin' the past five years,
I could not say, 'Where you go, there I go'?"

"But, Pat," Jack gravely remonstrated. "Have you fully considered the matter. It may mean to death's door, ay——"

"To death's dure, or through it, for that matther," Pat doggedly persisted. "If you whistle, I'll come."

"God bless you, boy. That's the first encouraging word I've heard in many a day, and I'll not

forget it," said his master, grasping his hand and giving it a hearty shake. "But remember, you're leaving pleasant corners for less cheerful ones. Take time to reconsider."

"I've reconsidhered and considhered again. I'm glad o' the chanst to get away from here, partly because you're goin', and partly because——Well, never mind. I'm wid you."

"Because what, Pat?"

"Well, sur, because of a woman, if y' must know."

"Oh, ho! A woman, eh? Women seem to be at the bottom of all mischief, don't they?"

"Well, I don't know about that, sur. Me father—Lord ha' mercy on his sowl—used to say when he was whippin' me, that he was doin' it for me good, but I couldn't see it that way. This may be all for the best," he added philosophically.

"Tell me about it, unless you consider it a private matter," continued the master. "I'm interested."

"Well, sur, 'twas this way: I had me eye for a long while on one o' Lady Sturling's girls, Mary Doyle, an' faith I was makin' pickchers in me eye

o' mesel' an' hersel' settled down on some little place as snug as two frogs undher a toadsthool. Finally, says I to mesel': 'I'll sphake to her, an' break the news,' never thinkin' but that she'd say 'Yes' so quick as to take me breath away. But there was two things ag'in' me at that time. One was that Mary had just been promoted to Lady Muriel's Frinch maid's place—the wan that was discharged-which made her full o' the divil's own notions, and the other thing was Sergeant McGinnis. An' may the divil fly away wid the same McGinnis, God forgive me. Well, since Mary sthepped int' the shoes o' the Frinch maid there was no sthandin' her at all, at all. In the firsht place, Mary Doyle became Marie D'Oyle, an' her pug nose fairly tilts backward, as well as up. In the second place, McGinnis—oh, damn McGinnis! savin' yer presence, sur-

"Well, says I, afther beatin' about the bush for a while, 'Will ye have me, Mary?' 'Have ye for what?' says she. 'For betther or wurse,' says I. 'Yerra, go 'long wid ye,' says she. 'D'y' think I'd marry the like o' ye?' says she. 'Faix ye might,' says I, 'or wurse,' says I. 'Divil a

fear of it,' says she, 'so long as Sergeant Michael McGinnis is above ground,' says she. It was then I had me fursht rush o' brains to the head. 'So McGinnis is yer ch'ice?' says I. 'Well,' says I, 'if a scaarlet coat is what yer marryin', yer welcome to it,' says I. 'Faith ye'll find that in any three-ball shop in Whitechapel.' Wid that she came at me like a tiger-ess. 'Th' back o' me han an' the sole o' me fut t'y',' says she. 'Take yersel' out o' here,' says she; 'an' the farther y' go the more y'r company'll be enj'yed,' says she. An' so, sur, if y' mus' know, there's the rest o' the raison. I'd like to get far enough from this spot t' make me company really enj'yable t' her. Th' farther we go the betther it'll plaze us all."

Jack laughed, in spite of himself. "A scarlet coat!" he bitterly soliloquized, forgetting Pat's presence, and thinking only of the apt application of this remark to his own love affairs. Pat scraped his foot to recall Jack from his meditations.

"Well, women are queer creatures, Pat," he added, as if to signify that the conversation was closed.

"Thrue for y', sur. But 'tis betther t' find it out now than afther y'r hitched t' one for life. When one offers me the back o' her hand an' the sole o' her fut before marriage, the divil only knows what she'll do aftherward. 'Tis likely 'twould be the sole o' her fut firsht, an' then the back o' her hand. Oh, well! there's as good fish in the say as was ever caught."

"Well, well, Pat. And do you decide to go with me?"

"I do, sur."

"So be it, then. We start Saturday."

"Very good, sur; the quicker the sooner."

And so, inside of a week, the *Tantallon Castle* was carrying them to Cape Town. Their preparations had been quickly made and their farewells were few. The fact of Jack's intended departure was made known only to the members of his family and some of his most intimate friends. Even they did not think he would do anything more serious than spend a few weeks roving about the country. In fact, his own ideas on the subject of the future were extremely hazy. He had no definite plan. His purpose was to visit the country

68

and then seize upon any opportunities that might present themselves. How far he would be successful he did not venture to think. But other men had succeeded, he argued, and why not he? Clearly there were opportunities there, which, as others had developed them, had produced fame and fortune. He had everything to gain and nothing to lose. If he failed, he could return to England and be no worse off than he was before starting. The principal stake which he risked was his life, and, as he felt at that moment, that was a minor consideration.

The train bore them to Southampton, and then from the ship's deck they watched the familiar headlands of England fade from view. Around him was laughter, and chatter, and bustle, but to these things he paid no attention. In spite of the feeling of recklessness that possessed him, he was deeply impressed with the panorama that was growing dimmer and dimmer. He was leaving his native land, perhaps never to return. He was leaving all that were near and dear to him, perhaps never more to behold them. In spite of himself, tears filled his eyes. Lower and lower

69

sank the horizon. Twilight succeeded sunset. A flashing beacon marked the shores of England. Even that grew dim and still more dim. Hark, the band was playing! Spirited and gay its strains sounded, and then soft and tender. It was the song of the soldier. Jack felt the impulse of it. He, too, was a soldier. Slower and slower the music went, and softer, and softer, and softer it diminished, until there was barely an echo of that strain known wherever Tommy Atkins has set foot—

"The Girl I Left Behind Me."

Jack bowed his head on the rail, as the melody sobbed its way into his own heart, and his silent farewell to *her* was dimmed with tears.

## CHAPTER VI.

JACK deliberately exiled himself from the various pleasures on shipboard. His heart was not in the numerous games and diversions which served to break the monotony for nearly everybody, so he pleaded one excuse or another for not mingling more freely with the passengers. There was one passenger aboard, however, whose acquaintance he had an intense desire to make. He had never seen this man before, but he had heard a great deal about him. The stranger was likewise a reserved man. He busied himself principally with his books; indeed, reading seemed to be his principal employment and his chief diversion. Jack felt himself attracted toward the man even before he had learned his identity. The stranger's appearance would have compelled attention anywhere. He was a man of powerful physique, crowned with a head which marked him as a leader of men.

"Know that man?" asked one of the ship's stewards, almost as soon as Jack had gone aboard, pointing out the stranger. Jack said he didn't. He was inclined to add that he didn't care who he was, but his heart gave a sudden thrill when the officer, taking great satisfaction in the act, continued: "That's Cecil Rhodes."

The uncrowned king of South Africa was on his way to Cape Town, after a visit to England. The very fact of his presence started innumerable surmises as to his errand and the results of his visit to the land of his birth. Jack felt greatly encouraged at the mere sight of the man. Here was one who had gone to South Africa so broken in health as to be obliged to remain, a perpetual exile. Jack had heard the wonderful stories of this man's meteoric career: how he had grown into prominence as the promoter of the great diamond trust; how, even while hunting for diamonds, he had continued his studies, and, after thoroughly preparing himself, had taken his degree at Oxford; and how, as a diplomat and prophetic pioneer, he had brought under the protection of the British flag an expanse of country which

England had never before even dreamed of as a part of her empire.

Jack involuntarily began to compare his own condition with that of Rhodes, when the latter started for Africa. In the matters of family, fortune, health, and age, the advantage was all with Jack. He smiled when he reached that point in the comparison, and reflected that there were two great factors which he had not considered—brains and determination. How to penetrate the reserve of the South African leader was the question which puzzled Jack's brain. He knew it could be simply managed by asking the captain to introduce him, but he desired that the meeting should be a casual one; and it came about in the simplest manner imaginable, when the ship had been out about a week. "Colossus," as some had called him, was walking up and down the deck, when suddenly a gust of wind lifted his cap and floated it in Jack's direction.

With a spring and a catch, reminiscent of old cricket days, Jack had the truant garment in his possession, and advanced to the owner.

"Well played," said Rhodes, thanking him as

he accepted the cap. And then they began to talk on many subjects, finally leading up to the subject nearest Jack's heart. Indeed, he put the direct question:

"In what direction does Africa furnish the best opportunities for a young man?"

Rhodes glanced sharply at him, and then, in his sententious manner, propounded this question:

- "Are you married?"
- "No," was Jack's puzzled response.
- "Is there a woman in the case?"
- "No; the woman is out of the case."
- "Ah, I see! Well, to answer your question, there are opportunities in every direction. In what direction were your ideas tending?"
  - "I have no fixed ideas."
  - "Where did you intend to establish yourself?"
- "Even that I hadn't determined. I thought I would take a look about the country and then settle upon something."
- "Rather a poor idea, if you are really sincere in your purpose of trying to win either fame or fortune. You ought to have some fixed purpose. This is a large country." It will take considerable

time to travel over it; and by the time you have done this you will feel that you ought to have accomplished something, and so, discouraged, you will start back for England. Before you leave Cape Town you ought to make up your mind whether you are going into sheep farming, or prospecting, or whatever you may decide upon. Then doggedly follow that course. If you do this, you will succeed; whereas if you try to spread your energies over the whole country, you will accomplish nothing unless it is by the merest chance. Do you know anything about cattle or sheep farming, or gold prospecting?"

Jack shook his head.

"That's bad," remarked Rhodes. "Let me ask you another question: Are you afraid of hard work?"

"No," replied Jack, with an almost explosive vehemence.

"Good!" remarked the other with a laugh. "I fancy you have the right sort of material in you. The principal difficulty is that you lack technical training. Your university course didn't include mineralogy or geology, so that if you go prospect-

ing you will need the assistance of men with practical experience in that line of work. It may be possible for you to combine sheep-farming or cattle-farming with that proceeding, although you want to be careful and not spread out your energies too thin. And remember this: all the diamonds in this country are not to be found at Kimberley; all the gold is not in the Witwatersrand. Make a bold strike for yourself."

"Yes; but where? As you have just said, this is a very large country," laughed Jack.

"That is something you will have to determine for yourself. Of course you do not expect me to lead you by the hand and find a gold mine for you. I have this same question put to me hundreds of times in the course of a year. You will have to determine your own destination. I would suggest that you keep out of the Boer countries, however. What there is has been pretty well gobbled up, and the political conditions would probably soon begin to irritate you. The English flag waves over vast stretches of country which have never been prospected. I can aid you in obtaining a grant of land there. For the rest, you must de-

76

pend upon yourself. Get yourself an outfit, find some men who have had experience as prospectors, lay in a good stock of ammunition and food, and make a start. Hundreds of young Englishmen come out here every year for the purpose of making their fortunes, but the trouble with most of them is, that they expect to pick up gold on the wharves at Cape Town or diamonds in the streets of Kimberley. They soon lose their courage and go back home to damn this country and all that it contains. Others are piqued in love affairs, and stay here just long enough to get over the first effects of that. You say there is no woman in your case?" he asked, breaking off suddenly, and looking Jack full in the face.

Jack blushed. "No; there is none—that is there was one—but I fancy that is all over with."

"Hm! I suspected something of the sort. Well, that is the way of the world, but it sometimes interferes with business. If you are prepared to go into this venture and give it all your energy and all your thought, I have reason to believe that you will succeed. It may take you months, or even years, but if you spend all your

time thinking about a woman six thousand miles away, you will simply have your trouble for your pains, so far as developing anything in this country is concerned. I am sometimes accused of being a woman-hater. That is not true. I find it works better to select single men who are heartwhole, however, when I have any project to advance. Such men are apt to take chances, without being obliged to consider wives or sweethearts, and they are apt to succeed where others fail, because life down here is only a desperate game of chance, anyway. As to your case, of course I do not presume to make any suggestions, much less criticisms. But this I do say: if the woman on whom you have set your heart is worthy of you, she will wait until you return. If she is not willing to wait, she is not worth your thoughts. I find that, as a general proposition, to apply in nine cases out of ten. By the way, did you have any ultimate idea of settling here?"

"I hadn't thought of that," replied Jack. "My first idea was to make some fortunate strike, if I could, and then to return to England."

"That is the old story," responded the other,

with a laugh that was tinged with cynicism. "I have heard that so many times that I cannot help laughing. I believe that you will not fail without having at least made a strong effort, so that I am not laughing at you. But let me suggest this to you: This is destined to be one of the greatest countries in the world. The railroads and telegraph lines are opening up new territory every day and developing possibilities long unsuspected. It might be worth while for you to consider the project of making your home here. It is an attractive country in many respects. The climate is good. A man can live here without a great deal of exertion, and, even as a landholder, is bound to grow rich. Within the next half centuryyes, within a quarter of a century—land which is being given away by the mile will be worth considerable when measured by the inch. Look at Johannesburg, with its fifty thousand white population. I can remember when it was a pasture, and a barren one at that, and when you wouldn't find a white man for miles around. There are tremendous possibilities here, if a man is willing to work and wait for them to develop.

What we need most of all is a class of educated and intelligent citizens, men who will stay in the country, bring up their children here, and permanently adopt it as a home. There are already too many whose sole idea is to make a hurried grab and then depart. Have I furnished you any suggestions?"

"Yes. You have put several good ideas into my head, thank you. I find myself leaning toward your suggestion of cattle or sheep farming. That will also give opportunities of making tours for gold or other ore. I would like some further suggestions on that line."

"Well, it is difficult to go closely into details. As you lack experience, you will need assistance from those who are familiar with this work, but you ought to have no trouble in finding two or three fellows who would be willing to join you, and at the same time pay a portion of the expense. This expense will be considerable at the start. You will need a string of oxen, a cart, several horses, and a stock of supplies. You can buy or trade with the natives, so far as sheep and cattle are concerned, and you can find a ready market for

80

all you can raise in that line. It is slow work at the start, but it is sure, unless the rinderpest wipes you out. That is a disease among cattle which sometimes works havoc, but you must take your chances. Now if you are ready to go into the undeveloped country of the Chartered Company, I will undertake to see that you obtain a grant of land, and then you must work out your own salvation. You say you have a letter to a gentleman in Johannesburg? Very well. Go there. It is a good point from which to make a start. The country will interest you, and before you have gathered your supplies you will hear from me as to the land."

"Thank you," said Jack. "I feel much encouraged by what you have said, and I will not fail without having at least made a fair effort."

"That's the right kind of talk. In the bright lexicon of youth, and so forth, you know, there's no such word as fail."

He had given Jack his own motto, and the latter felt a sort of inspiration from his acquaintance. Here was a man with fantastic dreams, but out of these dreams he plucked the delicate threads

which he slowly wove together until they bound an empire. "I shall not fail," Jack muttered, after the other had resumed his book.

Meanwhile the "Colossus" was taking an occasional peep at him from over the pages of his book.

"I'll keep an eye on that lad," he was saying to himself.

"Land's sighted, sur," said Pat, knocking at his stateroom door, one morning a fortnight later. Jack dressed and came on deck to take his first look at the country of his choice. Table Mountain loomed up, a misty shadow in the distance. Clearer and more distinct it stood forth, as each turn of the screws brought the ship closer, and then the city of Cape Town, located at its base, came into view. Jack gazed on the scene with a curious emotion. Was it to be success or failure? he asked himself. If the latter, he had determined to perpetually exile himself. If the former -well, Muriel, and England, and several other thoughts were mixed up so rapidly that he broke off his day dream and ordered Pat to make ready to land the luggage.

## CHAPTER VII.

There were many things that surprised Jack during his first week's stay in Africa, but the most surprising thing of all was Johannesburg. Picturing in his mind's eye a rough mining town, he was astonished to find instead of this caricature a vision of loveliness which he was at first inclined to view as a mirage. Splendid public buildings, magnificent shops, private dwellings palatial in their grandeur, beautifully laid out streets and squares, and modern improvements of the most advanced character—this was the reality. The rough mining camp had disappeared, and in its place had sprung up a magic city. It had a population of upward of fifty thousand, with several thousand more residents on its outskirts.

"Yes, a magic city," replied his friend to whom he had delivered a letter, as they slipped a brandyand-soda at the Rand Club. He spoke with a

feeling of pride, tinctured with bitterness. "A magic city, certainly, and yet the magicians have no more voice in it than if they were Patagonians, instead of genii. Its creators were mainly Englishmen, but they have no more to say as to how it shall be conducted than if they were Russian serfs."

Jack was surprised at the bitterness with which he spoke. "Why, I thought this was a Republic," he said, "and that each man had equal rights."

"Equal rights?" the other bitterly echoed. "Equal wrongs, rather. The principal right we enjoy is the right to be taxed—taxed—taxed—ternally taxed."

"Why don't you protest?"

"Protest? Why, we have protested, again and again. But that does no good. By and by there will come a protest—one that they'll heed—and it will be backed up by a man with a gun. That's the only protest to make an impression on the thick skulls of these Boers."

"You astonish me," said Jack. "Why, I did not imagine that that was the character of the Boers. I made the acquaintance of one on the

84

train from Cape Town, and he seemed to be one of the most agreeable of men."

"Oh, there are exceptions, of course. I know some who are the best fellows imaginable, but the great majority are narrow, ignorant, and conceited. They hate us English with a hatred that is hereditary. It is an effort on the part of the very best of them to hide that feeling, while the lower element openly avow it, even to taunting you to your face with Majuba Hill."

Jack whistled softly. "So this is the kind of crowd I will have to meet," he commented.

"You? Oh, no! that is, if you stick to your resolution to settle in Rhodesia. There are none of them up there. They tried to trek up there once, but Dr. Jim had a word to say about it, and he said: 'No, you don't.' I wish we had a man like him here," the other continued with a savage growl.

"Are the taxes, then, so heavy?" asked Jack.

"Oh, it's not the taxes alone, but everything else piled up on top of that! That's but a single item. Here, sum up the situation for yourself. You admire this beautiful city. Ten years ago it

was a desert. Look at it to-day. You have read of the boom towns of America. They have nothing there which begins to compare with it in its marvellous growth. Ten years ago, as I have told you, it was actually a desert. Gold had just been discovered. The Boers didn't know how to get out the gold, and they induced the Uitlanders, as they call them, to come here and get it out for them. At that time their rule was comparatively easy. If a man wanted to become a citizen he could do so after two years of residence. Taxes were also light. As for the other comforts of civilization, they were difficult to get, and no one grumbled. In those days we were invited to come, and everything was made as easy as possible. Now everything is as hard and irritating as their crafty ingenuity can make it. The newcomers were mainly Englishmen, with a sprinkling of Germans and Americans, and as our numbers increased, the Boers, from being apparently friendly, became distinctly jealous."

"But why not accept citizenship and change all this with your ballots? Your votes would outnumber theirs and compel a change."

"When a change is brought about, it will be by a more powerful argument than the ballot," the other replied significantly. "Citizenship? Why, their very first move was to block all that," he continued with increasing warmth. "As I have told you, when we first came two years' residence was required. Now it is fourteen. And do you think that any man, who knows what the Union Jack signifies throughout the world, would change its protection for their miserable rag? No, no; that's not English talk!"

"Oh, I did not mean to suggest that a man should deliberately forswear allegiance to his country for good," Jack hastened to explain, "but that while he remains here he might go through the form of citizenship in order to demand that equity which otherwise seems impossible."

"It's as impossible in one way as it is in another. After you have completed your term of residence, you have to be practically passed upon by them to determine your fitness. And then you've got to belong to their psalm-singing, Scripture-quoting, hypocritical Dutch church. There is no liberty of speech, or conscience, or religion.

Equity? Why, they don't know the meaning of the word. You'd find that out in short order if you had anything to do with their courts. There is neither liberty of speech nor liberty of conscience. A man must transform himself into a Dutchman of their own type before he is eligible. An Englishman might as well try and transform himself into a camel."

"Then citizenship is a practical impossibility?"

"Now you've said it. It's just that and nothing else. As a consequence everything here is Dutch—Dutch officials, Dutch courts, Dutch schools, and until very recently Dutch churches. The only thing here that isn't Dutch is money. That's English, and they're mighty willing to accept all of that they can get their hands on. That's the only English thing they like. Just think of bringing your children here and sending them to Dutch schools, with Dutch text-books and Dutch teachers, and compelling them to ignore their own language, so far as these schools go, because it is not permitted there."

"I should say so!" commented Jack, almost under his breath. His companion puffed viciously

at a cigar for a moment. "And is there no hope of a change?" Jack asked. "Is it possible that the Boers can lag so far behind in the march of civilization? It seems as if the advancement of the times would almost involuntarily induce them to take a broader view of the situation."

"Yes, it does seem so," was the glowering response, "but you don't know the Dutch character. To them the world means the limits of the Transvaal. They look at everything through their heavy Dutch eyes, and hear everything through ears that are stuffed with prejudice. As for themselves, they look upon the Boers as invincible since Majuba Hill. They forget what we did for them when the Kaffirs threatened to wipe them from the face of the earth. Hope of a change? Yes, there is a hope. In the course of a hundred years or so they may become sufficiently broad to realize the meaning of the term 'equal rights,' but it is not probable even then, although those who were educated abroad are inclined to take a more liberal view of things as they exist now. Still, these few count for little. There is another hope. It's slowly crystallizing, but it's likely to take form

89

one of these days, and that before long. We've sent one protest to Pretoria, and we're sending another which will have a sting in its tail. It may mean trouble, but I doubt it. When it comes down to the fine point they're a cowardly lot, and there are enough of us here to support our side of the argument, if need be. Why, there are more people here than in all the rest of their country.

"No, you've no concern here," he continued, in response to a further question from Jack. "Go where the British flag will float above you. There is no chance for you here. Everything that is worth having is gobbled up. Your means would be as nothing. All that is likely to develop will be given away to Germans or European Dutch. They are the pets of the Government, and they control everything that it is possible for the Government to give in the way of new concessions, whether it be mines, railroads, or rights for importing whiskey, or dynamite, or what not. No, you go your way. There's no place for you here. Farther north there are opportunities."

In whatever way he turned Jack found this same

story of deliberate oppression. Even the Americans were treated with some degree of consideration. American brains and British capital seemed to form the partnership on which the mines were worked. These were not the only representives for foreign countries who had strayed to that little section of the world. In fact, Cosmopolis would be a more fitting name for the place than Johannesburg. Every nation under the skies seemed to be present by proxy, but the dominating composite of American and English ideas marked every feature of the place. It was their money and their brains that had built up the city, and in its architecture, at least, they had left their indelible impress.

As was natural, perhaps, in a place of such rapid growth, which appealed to the adventurous natures of all countries, there was a class of parasites whose presence could well have been dispensed with. With all its magnificence there was with it a depravity which would have honored Whitechapel or the Bowery. This was apparently winked at by the authorities. If the Outlanders felt any disposition to abolish it they manifested it only in occasional spasms, and, as a whole, not

having the right to legislate it out of existence, regarded it as a subject for which they were not responsible.

Gambling was an evil which had not assumed general proportions. In the clubs a friendly game was allowed, and no objection was raised to it, and on the race tracks the bookmakers operated with impunity. They were not only tolerated, but a certain space was reserved for them in which to ply their vocation.

Although invited to participate in some of the social festivities of the town, Jack declined these invitations as a rule. He felt himself a woman hater. To the one woman whom he considered responsible for this condition of affairs he had sent a letter, and, after sending it, had declared to himself that his faith in womanhood was eternally shaken. Between the clubs and the hotel he spent the time that he did not employ riding about the country. This was pleasant enough to him until an incident occurred which hastened his departure from the town to the country which he had decided, while on the steamer, was to be his ultimate destination.

At one of the clubs he fell in with a party of jovial spirits, and one evening he joined them over the brandy and the cards. Poker was the game—an American introduction which many found very fascinating. The stakes usually began at a low figure, but frequently climbed to alarming heights during the excitement of the game. One evening Jack was induced to take a hand, by dint of much persuasion, and to join with an Englishman, an American, and a new arrival from Aus-Under the influence of the game, the tralia. fascination of the company, and an occasional drink, the evening was passing very pleasantly for Jack. For a time he won steadily, and then his luck seemed to change. His fortunes went as rapidly in the opposite direction, and finally the game began to become more exciting under the goading of an occasional high stake. Jack was the loser, but that fact seemed only to aggravate his obstinate determination to persist. He realized that over a hundred pounds of his money had gone into the pockets of some of the others, but still, incited by the fatuous hope of regaining it, he persisted in playing until he saw a movement on

the part of one of the others which made its way to his brain with the speed of a bullet. Should he protest? He decided to wait and watch. When it was repeated he threw down his hand with an oath.

"You're cheating," he yelled, rising from his chair and pointing his finger at the dealer, the Australian.

"Cheating, sir? Be careful how you make that charge," warned the other, also rising to his feet, with a menacing gesture toward his hip pocket.

"Careful?" and he laughed savagely, his anger and the liquor uniting to work his brain to a phase of recklessness. "I repeat the charge. You're cheating. I saw you dealing from the bottom of the pack."

"You lie!" was the hot reply, emphasized by the presence of a revolver.

How all the rest of it came about Jack never knew, but in a moment the revolver had been dashed against the wall by an angry sweep of his arm, and exploded harmlessly on the floor. Beside it the Australian found himself in the twinkling of an eye, knocked by an angry blow from the now

enraged Englishman, who had learned one thing of advantage to him during his college career. The other two players now interfered to prevent further trouble and the members of the club, gathering about the disputants, decided that all money should be returned, and that the Australian and his friends should be ejected from the place. Not only that, but they were told that their presence in the town was unwelcome, and that they should lose no time in placing themselves as far beyond the border as possible.

"Curse you!" said the enraged Australian, nursing a swollen spot on his temple with his left hand, while with his right he shook his fist at Jack. "I'll have my revenge."

"Bah!" was the contemptuous response. "I fear your threats as much as I fear you. Why, the flag that floats above you ought to be perpetually draped at half mast."

Threatening revenge the Australian slunk from the place, followed by his American associate. Jack, now thoroughly sobered, and likewise thoroughly disgusted, shortly followed him, escorted to his hotel by some of the club members, who feared

that the gambler might put into execution his late threat. He did not do so, however, nor had he any immediate intention of so doing. He retired from public light for a few days to develop his plans, for he meant what he said, as Jack was soon to learn.

"I'll leave here at once," Jack resolved, when he had reached his apartments. "I'm sick of the place. There seems to be nothing straightforward about the town, and the sooner I get away from it the more contented I'll feel. Pat!"

"Yes, sur."

"Begin to pack. We leave here without delay."

"Very good, sur. Is the outfit ready?"

"It will be when you are. I'll arrange for that."

"Very good, sur."

A bright morning in late August found them on the road, with their faces toward the north. First came a tall Zulu boy, magnificently attired in a pair of earrings and a breech clout. He carried in his hands a long, slender pole, with which he directed the movements of the leading yoke of oxen. Six more yoke of oxen followed the lead-

ers, all hauling a great, heavy Dutch wagon. This wagon was covered with an immense sheet of canvas, spread over semi-circular hoops, and could be rolled back at their pleasure. On the wagon seat was perched another Zulu boy, who aided his countryman at the head of the procession, by urging on the oxen with his whip. He was an expert in the use of this implement. It consisted of a bamboo pole, as long as a fishing rod, on the end of which was fastened a long cowhide thong. The driver would circle this about his head, and then snap it with the accuracy of a marksman on any designated spot of any one of the fourteen oxen. Inside the wagon were stacked their stores of biscuit, coffee, tea, sugar, canned meats, and vegetables, as well as a few cases of liquor. Two other Zulu boys trotted on beside the wagon, while as an escort rode Jack, Pat, and the two prospectors who had joined their fortunes with Jack.

# CHAPTER VIII.

THE two new additions to the party were characteristic examples of that cosmopolitan army of gold-seekers to be found in whatever section of the world the alluring metal is discovered. One was a tall, raw-boned American, an ungainly but powerful chap, whose long arms and legs gave him an appearance of awkwardness, but who was, nevertheless, as quick as a panther when occasion demanded. He presented an almost comical appearance as he bestrode his wiry pony, for his long legs almost touched the ground. His name was Harrington, he said. His companion was called McDonald, "Mac" for short, and he was the antithesis of the other. He was short and thickset, and inclined to be ruminative rather than talkative. They were alike in one respect, in being bronzed by exposure to the sun of many lands. Jack had heard of them at one of the

98

clubs, and after he had broached his scheme to them, he found them only too willing to join him. They appeared to be honest fellows, and, what was more important, they had had experience in prospecting in Australia.

"Ah-h-h!" said Harrington, taking in a huge gulp of the fresh air as they left the city behind them and struck into the open country. "This reminds me of Coleraydo."

"Yes?" said Jack inquiringly. He knew his companion was an American, but more minute information regarding him he had not asked, being content to accept the man on his appearance. He was willing to learn more about him, however, and his answer encouraged the other to proceed.

"Yes," continued the other, "there's the same bracin' air an' the same dancin' atmosphere. Even the hills remind me o' the old place."

"So Colorado is your home then?" Jack queried.

"Well, my home is putty nearly anywhere I hang my hat up. I was born there, howsomever. My parents trekked it from New England, as you'd say here, when the gold fever broke out on the Pacific Coast."

"I understood you to say that you had prospected for gold in California and Australia, too?" continued Jack.

"Yes, an' found it, too. Mighta had some o' it now if I hadn't been a durn fool. Eh, Mac?" addressing his comrade.

"Yes. An' same here," replied Mac.

"Things were goin' slow in Cal'forny, an' we were all excited by the news from the gold fields of Australia, so I shipped out there. Had hard luck for a while, but I learned a good many tricks about prospectin' and herdin', an' finally I met Mac, an' we made a good strike. We couldn't stand prosperity, however, an' after we sold out our claim, we started out to celebrate. When we got through we had a pocketful of experience, an' that's all. This time I intend to app'int someone my guardian, an' see if I can't put by enough t' last me the rest o' my days. This country makes some almost homesick, it minds me so much of Coleraydo. I'd like t' make my little pile an' go back there t' end my days."

"Let's hope for all our sakes that you'll find your wish granted," said Jack, sprightly.

"Well, let's drink to our swift prosperity," said Harrington, producing a flask which he offered to Jack.

"I'll join you in that," responded Jack with heartiness, "and it's the last drink I'll take for some time—that is, unless in case of sickness. My friends in Johannesburg tell me that that stuff has done more to injure the prospects of white men in this country than all other things combined—and black men's chances, too."

"Dunno but you're right, pardner," returned Harrington. "It's served me more bad turns than good ones, in the long run. Well, here's to health an' prosperity," he continued, following the toast by raising the bottle to his lips and then throwing it away. "I guess you're right. A little of it is good when a man is cold, and wet, and tired, but the trouble is that when a fellow becomes his own doctor he is apt to prescribe an overdose before he knows it. Still, I'm glad we thought to include some of it in the outfit. A peck or so of quinine, a case of brandy, and another of gin, are worth a regiment of doctors, when taken at the proper time, and under the

proper conditions. An' where we're goin' it isn't easy to telephone for a doctor in the middle o' the night."

"I'm afraid he'd be a long time comin'," put in Mac.

"By the way, what was the trouble you had with Fleetwood?" asked Harrington. "I heard you had a little fracas at the club, an' they tell me you had a pretty close call."

"Oh, nothing of any account!" Jack replied.
"We were playing your great American game of poker, and he was instructing me in its mysteries, when I saw him dealing from the bottom of the pack and called him."

"Pulled a gun on yer, didn't he?"

"Yes, but he didn't fire it."

"Didn't have time, did he?"

Jack laughed carelessly at the recollection.

"That was what I heered," was the jocular comment. "Well, he is a bad lot, an' one o' these days he'll run agin the muzzle o' somebody's gun—somebody who kin shoot quicker'n he kin—an' then there'll be a post-mortem which the coroner'll diagnose as a case of suicide after the fact."

"You know him, then?"

"No, thank yer. That is, I don't know him, but I know of him, an' I can't say that I know any good o' him. I heered o' him in Melbourne, five years ago. I guess he was driven out o' the place. Now he seems to have settled down here, with his slick talk, an' his dude dress, all of which will cost the boys a pretty penny before he gets through with them."

"Well, thank Heaven, we're out of his way!"

"We won't be too sure o' that for a while," responded Harrington. "We'll take turns on watch nights, for from what I've heard o' that feller there's nothin' too mean nor too desprit for him to do."

"Do you think he'd dare to follow us?"

"Don't know as he would. On the other hand, don't know as he wouldn't. Not knowin' nothin' about it, we're takin' no chances. If he does come loafin' around here I'll inject a pill inter him, an' it will be made o' medicine he won't like."

But a week passed and there was no sign of Fleetwood. In accustoming themselves to the daily routine they had almost forgotten all about

that incident. There was a novelty about the situation of which Jack had not yet tired. He laughed as he took a survey of his costume, and compared it with his London toggery, as he recalled his former appearance. Instead of shapely shoes, he wore a pair of heavy boots (into which he had tucked the extremities of his trousers), a blue flannel shirt, and a broad brimmed hat. There were the essential components of his new uniform.

The only drawback on his spirits was the slow progress of the oxen. If they averaged a half-score miles a day they were doing well, notwith-standing the shouts and pricks of the Zulus. Across the broad veldt they dragged their slow steps, then up hill and down hill, and across the bed of an occasional stream. The roads, if one could call them such, were of the poorest quality; and as for bridges, such things were unknown.

At midday they halted to rest the oxen and cook a hasty meal. This was an operation, pastoral in its simplicity. A shallow hole was scooped in the ground, in which a fire of manure chips was built, and over this they fried their

chicken or warmed their beef or tongue, as the case may have been. Chicken had the call as an article of diet because it afforded fresh food and was obtainable from an occasional farmer whose house they passed on their journey. The canned goods supplied a variation on the bill of fare, but, while entirely acceptable, they lacked the attraction of a fresh, fried chicken. Coffee they had in plenty, and sugar too, and with these and some biscuit they "lived like kings," to quote the veracious Pat.

At night they outspanned the cattle, pitched their little tent, and repeated their cooking operation. The meals of the Kaffirs were even less pretentious. A huge black pot was their sole utensil, and their single article of provender was a combination they called "mealie," a species of cornmeal mixed with water, which they boiled in their black pot over a small fire, and, when the substance had reached the proper degree of heat and consistency, they ate with large spoons, directly from the pot. Knives and forks and napkins troubled them not. They were happy so long as the mealie held out, and it may be added that

was not very long after this vigorous half dozen got at it, unless the precaution was taken to prepare a generous measure for them.

As a relief to the monotony of the expedition, and also for the purpose of providing an occasional supply of fresh meat for the larder, some members of the party were in the habit of taking occasional rides over the veldt or among the kopjes in the hope of finding an occasional springbok. Jack had been having poor luck in his ventures, and he volunteered to stay in charge of the wagon, one day, while Harrington and McDonald started out. Pat was also to remain behind. The others had agreed to catch up with the wagon before nightfall. The air was filled with the pleasant warmth of spring and at noon Jack halted and ordered the Kaffirs to outspan and let the oxen graze in a bit of green visible from the wagon, while he lay within the shade jointly offered by the cart and by a low-hanging eucalyptus tree. Pat had ridden off to a small stream for the purpose of bathing his horse's hoofs, the animal having shown signs of soreness. The soothing quiet had lulled Jack into a state of semi-consciousness,

when there was a sudden rush of feet, and he felt himself pinioned to the ground.

"So we meet again, don't we?" asked a voice, which, even before Jack could see the face of the owner, he knew came from the sneering lips of Fleetwood. Beneath the grasp of the latter and a companion, Jack's struggles were unavailing. It was the work of a moment for them to bind him, hand and foot.

"Now we'll trouble you to pay your just debts," continued Fleetwood.

"There's one debt that I'll pay with interest," was Jack's angry retort.

"I hope you won't be in any hurry to discount it," was Fleetwood's ironical reply. "Come, now," changing his tone and assuming one of menace, "we've come out here for your money box. Produce it. The quicker the better for you, if you value your life."

<sup>&</sup>quot;Never!"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Come, come!" was the warning suggestion.
"You'd better be reasonable. We're desperate men, and we're not going to talk all day."

<sup>&</sup>quot;I'd see you hanged first."

"Look in the wagon there," said Fleetwood, addressing his companion. "You'll probably find it there. If you don't find it, and he won't tell us where it is, we'll leave him dumb forever. Quick, the Irishman and the Zulus may return at any moment. In the mean time I'll examine his belt."

Jack made a vigorous but ineffectual protest. Fleetwood made a thorough search of his effects, and just as he had finished his companion announced that he had been successful in his search.

"Sorry to disturb you!" was Fleetwood's smiling remark, as he shook a little bag of gold in Jack's face, "but when a gentleman refuses to pay his just debts, he ought not to complain when they are collected for him. I've half a mind to put into him the bullet that missed him at Johannesburg," he added, drawing his revolver.

"No, no!" protested the other. "The report would call the attention of the Irishman and the Zulus. Let us get out of here as soon as possible, and get our horses."

"Not until I leave him something to remember

me by," replied Fleetwood savagely, aiming a blow with the butt of the revolver as he passed the prostrate Jack. Then they glided away, as silently as they had come, and Jack saw more stars at midday than were visible to him on any ordinary night. For a moment he lost consciousness, but when he awoke to a full realization of the outrage which had been perpetrated he cried in his impotent rage. He struggled to his feet, and was rasping at his cords on one of the wheels of the cart, when Pat put in an appearance in the distance.

"What th' divil is the matther with the masther?" he asked himself, quickening the pace of the ponies, as he watched Jack's apparently crazy motions. "What ails ye, sur?" he asked, as soon as he had come within hailing distance.

"Quick! Cut these ropes," frothed Jack. Pat complied. In a trice Jack was free.

"An' who done this?" asked Pat.

"Those hounds I met at Johannesburg," replied Jack. "Come, follow me," he added, vaulting into his saddle. "They've got only a few minutes' start, and they've taken our money."

He was a quarter of a mile away before Pat sufficiently recovered from his open-mouthed astonishment to understand the situation. Then he tore along after his excited master. In some respects it was a foolish chase. Not a soul was in sight. The broad veldt on the one side was deserted. A sea of coarse grass, with an occasional bowlder, made a monotonous level for miles. Nor was there any sign of life among the low-lying hills to the left.

Crack! went a rifle. Crack! Crack! Crack!—
a fusillade.

"There they are!" cried Jack, turning his horse toward the hills, from which direction came the sound.

"More power t' ye, whoever y' are," muttered Pat, following suit. Warily they rounded a kopje. In the distance they saw a figure dashing across a level spot. Crack! went a rifle. The figure continued on its course without faltering. Crack! another shot. There was a sudden lurch, the figure of the rider threw up its hands, and then fell from the horse.

"Be the powers o' war, it's the Yankee man!"

cried Pat exultingly, a savage joy filling his breast as he caught sight of a figure on a higher peak. "I'll bet the money's safe after all."

It was Harrington. When they reached him, he was bending over the prostrate form of Fleetwood's companion, whose horse stood grazing nearby.

"Lucky for us my horse sprained his foot," remarked Harrington. "He's been visitin' yer, I take it?" he asked, pointing to the prostrate figure at his feet.

Jack nodded.

"Faith he has, an' small manners t' him," quoted Pat. "We were lookin' for him, when we heard yer shot."

"Well, y' kin spare y'rself the trouble now," drily replied Harrington, placing his hand over the heart of the prostrate man. "He's dead, fast enough."

"Well, 'tis a short shrift he got, but he desarved no betther," continued Pat. "An' is the money with him?"

"No. Guess the other fellow's got that. Anyhow, it's safe enough. He looks as if my pill had put him to sleep, too."

It was even so. When they reached the other prostrate form the sands of life had about run out. He made a movement of his lips, as if cursing the newcomers, and then gazed at them with fast glazing eyes as Harrington felt inside the bosom of his shirt, and after a moment announced:

"I've got it."

"I was restin' my horse on the top o' the hill," he explained, "when I saw these two chaps ridin' like mad toward me. I saw them headin' for the pass, and I suspected them long before I could make out who they were. As soon as they came within range I fired and got this fellow. The other fired at me, and then started off across country, but I fetched him, after a couple of tries. It was luck for us that my horse stumbled and went lame, just as he did."

Jack felt himself overcome by a queer emotion as he gazed on the prostrate gambler, and realized that a few dollars was the cause of it all.

"Never you mind, I'll take all the responsibility," said Harrington, noticing his look of horror. "These fellers are better out o' the world than in it. They've got their just dues—that's

all. In this country it's kill or be killed in cases of this kind. If I've got t' choose, I'll take the fust. We can't wait for judges an' courts. You've got y'r money back, an' seein' that their hosses an' guns are no use t' them now, we'll take them in payment of undertaker's bills. Come, turn to, and let's give them a decent burial, anyway."

"We'd oughter be getting our bearin's pretty soon," said Harrington, one morning, nearly a month after they had left Johannesburg, while the weary oxen were slowly tugging up a steep incline. "We've crossed the Limpopo, an' from the top o' this hill we ought to be able to see somethin'. We can't be far away from our grant. Hello! What's that?" he cried, as they reached the summit. Harrington was shading his eyes and pointing in a northwesterly direction. "Is that a signal of some sort?"

Jack elevated his glass and gazed long and steadily. Then his ordinary calmness gave way to the excitement of a madman.

"The Union Jack, by all that's holy!" he ejaculated.

# CHAPTER IX.

Muriel had driven to Lady Stanmore's house, and, without formality, assuming the privilege of an intimate friend, had stalked directly to her boudoir. Yes, stalked! Her manner suggested a feeling of deep indignation, and yet, Lady Stanmore, sweeping a swift glance at her, saw that she was a picture of indecision, and that her assumed determination was all that saved her from dissolving into a modern Niobe.

"Ah, good-morning, my dear! I trust you are well, this morning," was Lady Stanmore's hearty greeting.

Muriel replied seriatim: "Good-morning. Yes, I'm perfectly well," and then, as if to rule out all further preliminaries, she added:

"Just read that."

Lady Stanmore grasped the sheet of paper which Muriel almost thrust into her face and rocked slowly as she perused it. Muriel sat bolt upright

in the straightest-backed chair in the room, tapping the floor with her right foot as she watched Lady Stanmore's lifted eyebrows, and beating a regular tattoo as the latter occasionally punctuated her reading with an aloud: "Well! Well!" or "Dear me!"

"Well, I never!" ejaculated Lady Stanmore, slowly folding the letter, and gazing at Muriel.

"Did you ever?" interrogated Muriel, tightening her lips and giving herself a twitch of additional uprightness.

- "When did you get this?"
- "This morning."
- "And so he's really gone to Africa?"
- "That's what he says."

"Well, well! I'm astonished. I heard that story, but I thought it was only a joke, and that he would eventually return from some shooting expedition. You know he's a great fellow to stray off that way, without saying a word to anybody, when he takes a notion."

"Yes, I know it; but there seems to be no doubt about it."

"No; it's dated Johannesburg. Yes, and the letter bears that postmark. Well, well, well! I can hardly convince myself, but here's his own word for it." Lady Stanmore settled herself anew in her chair and opened the letter again.

"' Dear Muriel," she read, this time aloud and slowly, as if to see if there was not some hidden meaning to each word, "'I feel that I may so address you, because it is possible it may be for the last time.' [Dear me!] 'Since our last conversation I have thought a great deal of what you said regarding the duty of men doing something in the world, and I have finally decided on a course for myself. It is not a very heroic one, and yet it seemed to be the only thing open to me. To remain in England was out of the question. I had fitted myself for no special vocation, and so I have joined the great army seeking a Mecca of fortune on this continent. I am about to leave here for Rhodesia. I have obtained a grant of land there, and if luck favors me, may win some measure of success. If it does not, then I'll stay here. There is as much for me here as in England, and I can at least comfort myself with the

will-o'-the-wisp of a hope that I may eventually find luck.' [Well, well, well!]

"' I left you with somewhat bitter feelings, and a partial reason for writing you was the desire to say that after thinking over your remarks on the steamer and since I arrived here, I have come to the conclusion that you were right. A man really ought to do something in the world. But what? That was the conundrum for me. I saw no way to answer it in England, and so I joined the army of young fellows propounding similar questions to themselves, and came out here. Even now the conundrum is as puzzling as ever, but I have at least the feeling that I am honestly trying to solve it—which is something.

"'It is possible that I may never see England again. I have so determined in case I do not succeed, but the feeling of bitterness with which I left has given way to one that your suggestion was a kindly one, after all, and I thank you for it. What might have been is past. What may be, I cannot say. I may confess to you on paper what my lips could not frame, that I had hoped to find some measure of favor in your eyes, and the

memories of pleasant hours in your company will be ever cherished in my heart. Doubtless, should I ever return, I shall find Wallace or some other lucky fellow occupying the place in your affections which I have coveted for myself; but even so, I shall hope to be able ever to subscribe myself, as I do now, Your friend,

"' JOHN DERRINGTON.'

"Well, well!" said Lady Stanmore, looking up with moist eyes.

"Is that all you can say, Lady Stanmore?" asked Muriel petulantly. "I came to you hoping to get some suggestion or some sympathy——"

"My dear, you know you have my sympathy," interrupted Lady Stanmore, with a slight shadow of reproof in her voice, "but as for suggestions, you can hardly expect to pounce down on me so suddenly, and find me to be stocked on tap with them. I am so surprised to find that he is really gone that I can hardly think of anything else."

"Yes; he's gone, and I am the one that sent him. Oh, I am so miserable!" cried Muriel, throwing herself at her friend's feet and burying

her face in her lap. "I'm so miserable," she sobbed. "I know he'll never return from that horrid place. The savages will kill him or he'll die of fever, and it will be all my fault."

"Oh, come now; don't look at the dark side of the picture!" said Lady Stanmore soothingly. "It may not be so bad as that. You know there are hundreds of young fellows who go there every year, and who do not die by savages or fever. Let us look at the bright side."

"Oh, there is no bright side!" cried Muriel, from the depths of Lady Stanmore's lap, persisting in finding a solace in her misery and a relief in her tears.

"It is possible that he may make a rich strike there, and then he'll come back."

"But if he doesn't he says he won't come back."

"Muriel, you surprise me. I had no idea that you cared so much for him. I thought you had as much regard for several other young fellows, or even more. Now there's Lieutenant Wallace, for example——"

"Oh, bother Lieutenant Wallace!" broke in Muriel, springing to her feet. "That insignifi-

cant little poser. Why, I—I wouldn't marry him if he was the only man on the face of the earth, and I had to remain an old maid to the end of my days, otherwise."

Lady Stanmore pursed her lips and drew in a long breath which produced a soft whistle.

"What a mass of contradictions you are, Muriel," she said. "I'm not a mind reader. How can I judge except by exterior signs?"

"Lieutenant Wallace, indeed!" continued Muriel, scornfully. "One would think, to see him strut about, that the fate of all England rested on his shoulders, and that if he stooped we would all roll off into space. Lieutenant Wallace, indeed!"

"But you must admit that you seemed to regard him highly. And there's that South Polar man——"

"Yes, yes! I know what you are about to say. That's what Jack thought, too. But there isn't one of them to compare with Jack in his simple manliness. Oh, I am so miserable!" And the pent-up tears flowed afresh.

"Well, well; let us see what can be done!"

said Lady Stanmore comfortingly. "Is it too late to write or to telegraph?"

"I had thought of that, but you see he says he is about to start, and the letter is dated more than a month ago. I suppose by this time he is away in the wilderness. And what should I say if I did telegraph?"

That was a poser for Lady Stanmore.

"Possibly we could write to some one in Johannesburg, and get word to Jack through him. Johannesburg is a sort of a centre for Englishmen, I believe, and we might hear something in that way."

"But what could we say in a letter to anybody?"

"Well, I really cannot say," continued Lady Stanmore, realizing the force of the question, "unless——"

"Unless what?" asked Muriel quickly, looking up with a light of hope shining through her tears.

"Unless we should find out where he is and see him," she continued.

"See him?"

"Yes; go down there."

"Oh, but that's out of the question!" replied Muriel, the hopeful light fading from her eyes, and one of utter dejection taking its place. "What pretext could I offer for going away down there? I shouldn't want all the world to know. And perhaps Jack thinks differently now. He might stay there, anyway."

Lady Stanmore remained in deep thought for a moment.

"I have an idea, Muriel. How would this do: Supposing I should organize a little party to leave London for the winter season—say that we want to escape the fogs and the cold, and are in search of a little excitement by travel—and go to South Africa for the winter. We could go to Johannesburg—it's quite a civilized place, I believe. We might make some casual inquiries there, without betraying our real purpose, and possibly we might see him. A very dear old school friend lives there and she has several times invited me to do just that. What do you think of that plan?"

"Oh, Lady Stanmore!" cried Muriel, hugging her in her excitement. "And would you—could you—do that?"

- "I can and I will," was the determined reply.
- "But your husband, Lord Stanmore-"
- "Oh, I'll arrange all the plans! Never mind about them. So far as my husband is concerned, he'll do anything I ask him. Now you run home and leave me to think out the details."

"Oh, Lady Stanmore, I knew that I would find comfort from you!"

And with a hug and a kiss Muriel was off. She stalked out of the house with as much energy as she had manifested upon her arrival, but it was inspired by an altogether different emotion. The earth seemed to be some distance beneath her feet. The load off her heart had permitted her to rise until she felt as if she were walking on clouds.

### CHAPTER X.

"But, dearest——" protested Lord Stanmore, when he had regained his breath, after the proposition had been presented to him by his wife.

"Now, dear, don't put any 'buts' into the matter. I feel that a change would be pleasant. It's so cold here during the winter season. When it isn't foggy it's raining, and if it isn't raining it's blowing."

"You seem to have suddenly changed your opinion of a winter season in London."

"Oh, well! it's a woman's privilege to change her mind once in a while. One grows tired of the same things over and over again. I would like a change. Margery Wilson—Mrs. Brunelle, I mean—has several times invited me to visit her, and assured me that I would enjoy it. She may think that I do not appreciate her courtesy. Moreover, it would be a delightful experience, and

a great pleasure to Muriel and a few other friends."

"I don't quite see how I can arrange my affairs," said Lord Stanmore, rather dubiously.

"Why, you'd have to arrange your affairs if we were to spend the season on the Continent, as we had planned, and the distance isn't worth mentioning, by way of comparison, when you consider that there are cable facilities which will put you in communication with London at very short notice."

"How soon do you want to start?"

"In the course of a month or six weeks. Just as soon as we conveniently can. Say about the first of December."

"Whew!" he whistled. "You are bustling and no mistake. Well, just as you say," he resignedly added. "Make your plans and I'll see that they are carried out.

"' When a woman wills, she will,
You may depend on't;
And when she won't she won't,
So there's an end on't,'"

he quoted with a laugh. "For how many shall I arrange passage?"

"I don't really know, yet. There's Muriel, for one, and your niece, Georgia Dare—and I suppose she would like to ask her friend, Miss St. John, who is visiting her. Then I think we ought to have an additional man or two. Leave that matter to me," she continued. "I'll know inside of a week just whom I will invite."

But it was one thing to invite, and quite another to induce the desired people to accept. If it had been a dinner, or a dance, or a short trip into the country, Lady Stanmore's popularity would have made the task of selection a difficult one simply from the superabundance of willing material from which to choose. But a trip to South Africa, for three or four months—they shuddered at the proposition and pleaded one excuse or another until the good little woman was thoroughly angry.

"One would think they were being asked to go into a wilderness where they would be obliged to risk their precious lives," she complained to her husband, a day or two later.

"Has anybody accepted?"

"Oh, yes! Lord Popham expressed a pleasure

at accepting. I had to ask him as a sort of a last resort. He's not a bad fellow, however, and is quite a gallant in his way."

"I have some one in mind, if you would like to make a little addition to the party," continued Lord Stanmore.

"Who is it?" his wife eagerly asked.

"Mr. Weiss."

"Weiss? That little usurer? Never," replied his wife.

"But he's really not such a bad chap, after all," humbly remonstrated Lord Stanmore. "He's immensely wealthy, you know, and influential, and he has been of great assistance to me in some business matters, too."

"But I detest him, with his chuckle and his oily ways."

"Really, you're rather hard on him, I think. We can overlook some shortcomings because none of us are perfect, and he's quite genial and entertaining. Besides, I'm under obligations to him, and when I hinted that I was going down there for the winter he as much as said that he would like to make one of the party."

"Oh, well! invite him if you like. I dare say we can make him amuse us. Ask him."

And so it was settled. Lady Stanmore's preparations were forwarded with despatch, and in what seemed to be an inconceivably brief space of time, considering the amount of work accomplished, they were on the train for Southampton. A few hours more and the *Dunottar Castle* was bearing them out to sea.

"Good-by, old England," cried Lady Stanmore, waving her handkerchief at the receding cliffs.

"I hope we shan't be shipwrecked," was Miss St. John's apprehensive and somewhat irrelevant reply. "Dear me, I feel queerly already. I know that I am going to be seasick."

"Seasick? Nefer mind dat," consoled Mr. Weiss. "But shipwrecked—don' say dat. Ugh! don' say dat!"

It was really an unnecessary fear. Miss St. John's secondary dread was more substantial—yes, it was an actuality—but as the steamer approached the equator and the members of the party became accustomed to its roll, their experi-

ences on shipboard became a constant delight. A South African steamer trip, under normal conditions, is an event to be remembered. It is peculiar to itself in its pleasures. Three weeks on the water gives sufficient time for all who care to do so to become thoroughly acquainted, and moreover it is a space of time which actually demands companionship. The passengers aboard were largely English, with a few scattering representatives of other nationalities. The gentlemen aboard clubbed together and made up a pool for prizes, and then resolved themselves into committees for various kinds of sports. Think of a tennis game aboard ship! One side of the steamer was encompassed by netting, to prevent the balls from being knocked overboard, and within this enclosure a large number of the saloon passengers found daily diversion. Then there were quoits, running races participated in by both sexes, hurdle races, obstacle races with comical attendant features, egg races, and so on. Miss Dare won the egg race, which consisted of holding an egg on a spoon and running a certain distance on the deck. This is a feat which requires skill rather

than speed, as some of those who participated ascertained to their sorrow, when, in their anxiety to outstrip competitors, their spoons permitted the eggs to drop to the deck and disqualify the unfortunate contestants. Then there was a tug-of-war between teams selected from members of the crew in different departments of the ship, and so it went for days, until nearly everybody aboard had won a trophy. The games lasted for a week, when all interested ceased from sheer exhaustion. Then the prizes were again pooled, and, at Muriel's suggestion, distributed among the stokers, the waiters, and the seamen.

By way of intermission the steamer crossed the equator, and this incident opened up new possibilities; in fact, it brought forth the principal event of the voyage. Instead of hauling Father Neptune aboard, as was the custom on old English ships, the occasion was celebrated by a fancy dress ball in which everybody participated. Each person had a grotesque costume of some kind. Those who had made previous voyages on the line had provided themselves with the necessary outfits, but even those who had made no particular prep-

aration for such an affair found themselves lacking but few of the essential details of such costumes, thanks to the shrewd foresight of the stewards, who rejoiced in the opportunity to make an honest penny. Lady Stanmore found a big ruff, and with a little more material she converted herself into a supposed resemblance to good Oueen Bess. Lord Stanmore was transformed into a modern London bobby, a combination which was in comical contrast to that of his wife. Lord Popham became Charles I. What to do with Mr. Weiss was a conundrum, but Lady Stanmore solved it by smearing him with some grease paint, and telling him to act naturally. Muriel was induced to join the fun as the mournful Mary Queen of Scots, a character she found quite suited to her disposition, and Miss St. John and Miss Dare were quite sentimental as Little Bo-Peep and Red Riding Hood, respectively.

The evening was spent dancing on deck to the music of the ship's band, and taken altogether it was quite a memorable occasion. The preparations for the affair and the subsequent discussion of it consumed another week, and it seemed as if

but a few days had passed when the captain announced at dinner:

"We'll sight Table Mountain by to-morrow noon."

At which there was a disappointed murmur. The large family on board had become so interesting to its individual members that most of them regretted the separation. But it had to be. Two days later the train from Cape Town had borne them to Johannesburg. Mr. Brunelle met them at the station, and they expressed to him their delight at the trip.

"Yes, it is a matter of pleasure, now," he replied, "but when I first made it, ten years ago, I travelled the greater part of the distance on horseback, and most of the material for my house was hauled from the coast by oxen."

# CHAPTER XI.

"Isn't this delightful?" asked Miss St. John, for the hundredth time, as the party sat on the broad veranda of Mrs. Brunelle's residence, one pleasant morning a few days after their arrival.

"Indeed it is," Lady Stanmore complacently responded, looking around as if to demand a complimentary remark on her foresight and judgment in selecting the trip.

"Just think!" continued Miss St. John, with an excited little laugh, "to-morrow's Christmas. Would you ever believe it? Here we are, sitting in the open air, dressed in summer frocks, while our friends at home are doubtless shivering with the cold."

"Yes; or groping their way through a fog so thick that one might cut it with an ax."

"If the old saying, 'a green Christmas makes a fat graveyard,' is literally borne out here, there

ought to be a number of funerals hereabouts. How funny it does seem, after all, to be sitting here at this time of year. I can't really seem to comprehend it. Sometimes I pinch myself to see if I am actually awake. The whole country is so different from what I expected."

"Yes; just think of it! We started out, prepared to 'rough it,' as the men say, and we find ourselves in a centre of civilization so lively from a business and social point of view that, really, I feel like a country dame several years behind the times. Instead of rough houses, we are invited to the most magnificent establishments, filled with every imaginable luxury."

"Why, what did you expect to find?" asked Mrs. Brunelle, who had just joined the group.

"Well, I hardly know," stammered Clara, who had not noticed Mrs. Brunelle's arrival. "Certainly nothing on the scale of magnificence which we see on every side. I don't mind confessing to you that I felt actually dowdy at the ball, last night, in the presence of all those magnificently dressed women. And yet, I wore my newest gown, and thought I was looking my best."

Mrs. Brunelle laughed heartily at the implied compliment.

"Dear me! You didn't expect to find us going about like savages, did you?"

"Oh, no, no; not that! But I didn't have the slightest idea that I would step into a ballroom filled with Paris gowns not two months out of the designer's hands, and even now just appearing in the fashion publications."

Again Mrs. Brunelle laughed. "Why, my dear, we keep more closely in touch with such things here than you do in London. As soon as a new thing makes its appearance it is ordered, and inside of a month it is being worn here."

"It is not only that, but the entire place that has impressed me," broke in Lady Stanmore. "Really, Margery, I know you'll pardon me, but when I heard that you were living in a place that ten years ago was a desert, I really pitied you. But now—now that I've had a chance to see it with my own eyes—I envy you. Here are theatres, and balls, and parties enough to turn one's head. And the very nicest of society, too."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Brunelle, with a little

doubtful falter. "The society as a whole is very good. Some of it, of course, is a little bit parvenuish, but you must make some allowances for a place so young. It would be a somewhat difficult matter to trace an ancestry in this country," she added with a laugh.

"I shouldn't think you'd want to," was Lady Stanmore's smiling retort. "That is, unless you wanted to bow down to a black Kaffir or a roughlooking old Boer. I should think you wouldn't care to claim kinship with either, to judge from the looks of them."

"We don't," was the prompt retort. "More especially the Boers. They hate us, and we hate them. They'd poison all the English if they could. We have nothing in common, whatever. The only cloud on our pleasure comes from them. They've ground us so with taxes and other stupid things that the men are now talking of revolting, even if they bring on a war. Oh, it's really horrid! You've no idea how nervous it makes me feel. My husband is down at the club nearly every night, talking over these matters, and when he comes home he's so gloomy that there is hardly

136

any pleasure in having him around. Between his business and these meetings I hardly get a moment with him. They've sent a protest to old Kruger, and told him they would revolt if he did not modify some of the grievances of which they complained, and now they're waiting to see what will come of it. There is a terrible feeling in the place," she continued, lowering her voice as if she feared being overheard, "you can form no idea of how mad the men are. And they're getting ready for a desperate turn, for they have been importing guns and ammunition for weeks past, and some of the miners are even now being drilled so as to be ready to fight. We're putting a brave face on it, but I'm ready to leave town at an hour's notice."

"Dear me! I hope we are not going to be killed. I had no idea that there was any such trouble threatening," cried Miss St. John.

"Oh, I didn't mean to frighten you!" continued Mrs. Brunelle soothingly. "It may not amount to anything. The men are simply getting ready, and if they can show old Kruger that they mean business, they think he will come down from his high and mighty perch. Still, as I say,

there is a possibility of danger, and there's no knowing when it will appear."

"Oh, dear, I wish we had not come!" whimpered Miss St. John. "Hark! Don't you hear that terrible noise? I'm sure that is the signal, now. Don't you hear it?"

As they listened a wild murmur was borne faintly on the breeze. Now the tempo was slow and the music soft and dreamy; again the tempo quickened and the character of the songs became shrill and fierce. To the timid uninitiated it certainly was appalling in its savage weirdness and restrained vehemence, and the visitors felt a strange fear as the murmur came to their ears. Mrs. Brunelle laughed until the tears came to her eyes as she observed the alarm of her callers.

"No, no!" she ejaculated, between spasms of laughter, as she tried to reassure her guests. "There's no danger—absolutely none. This will be a spectacle worth seeing."

While she was speaking the murmur grew more and more distinct as the origin of it approached nearer and nearer. Eventually, from around a corner of a street, the cause of it emerged. A

party of about a hundred black men were marching, chanting in their own dialect, and showing in their manner the effect of the song upon themselves. One moment they would be sad and dejected; the next moment excited and warlike. All the while they marched in time with the music, clumsily dressed in imitation European fashion, with the exception of huge white turbans wound about their heads, which presented a picturesque contrast to their black skins and kinky hair.

"Our washboys," explained Mrs. Brunelle. "They come into the city once a month for their licenses and march about in this way. Pardon me for laughing. It scared me blue the first time I heard it, but it has become such an old story to me now that it convulsed me when I noticed the effect it had on you, after my bugaboo tales. No, it's no uprising, although I have shuddered when I have tried to picture the thousands of these fellows, then wholly savage, opposed to the few whites of a few years ago."

In a few minutes the Kaffirs had passed, and their song had become a reminiscent echo.

"I should think you'd leave here if such immi-

nent danger threatens," continued Miss St. John.

"Leave it for whom?" she asked indignantly.
"The Boers? Why, we built up this place.
Why should we leave it when we are stronger than they are?"

"But if they should attack you?"

"Well, that's only a possibility. If they should, I should leave the place for a time, but I'd return, because their attack would mean nothing. In the end, we'd conquer, and not only keep what we've got, but take all they possess. No, no! they have more at stake than we."

"Oh, I hope there will be no fighting!" ejaculated Miss St. John. "I fear I shall have that thought on my mind night and day until I am on my way to England again."

"Oh, don't worry about that! I've heard that kind of talk during the five years I have been here, and nothing serious has yet happened. We'll be safe enough. Have no fears on that score.

"Ah, Lord Popham, I trust you have been enjoying yourself!" she continued, addressing the newcomers, his lordship and Mr. Weiss.

"In the most chawming manner," his lordship replied, appearing almost enthusiastic, in spite of himself. "We've been down to the Rand Club. Delightful place," he commented.

"You bedt!" chimed in Mr. Weiss, reminiscently smacking his lips.

"Delightful fellows, y' know," continued his lordship. "Bah Jove, I was delighted with them. So smart and clever, y' know."

"Yes; our titles here are very limited. Some of the family trees couldn't be climbed very far, but as you say, there are some very delightful people here. It's really an aristocracy of brains. It almost makes my own head whirl when I look back at the five short years that I have been here. And yet, when measured by accomplishments, they seem long. Do you know, I'm really one of the oldest inhabitants, quite an oracle, so to speak, and yet, every time I go out for a drive, I seem to feel the need of a map, so rapidly are new buildings changing the surrounding appearances. Yes, it's one of the pleasantest spots in the world, and I'll venture the prediction that within the memories of all of us there will come a time when Johannesburg

will be one of the great centres of the world. But, come! I've bragged and preached long enough. Before you return to England there's one event I wish you to enjoy—the most captivating thing you have yet seen. It's the races of Christmas week. That is a sight worth seeing. I want you to tell your friends about that when you return. I'll wager it will astonish you. And I give you fair warning that you will need your finest dresses if you intend to try and rival us natives," she added with a laugh, as the party withdrew into the house.

"Muriel, I have news of him," said Lady Stanmore, calling the girl aside after they had returned to the house.

"Of whom? Jack?"

"Yes; Lord Stanmore had been commissioned by me to make some casual inquiries, and has learned that he left here three or four months ago to go up to a ranch in Rhodesia. He had an excellent outfit and some experienced prospectors for companions. He left orders to have his mail delivered at the club and sent to him by any parties going in his direction."

"And could we go up there?"

"I'm afraid not, dearest. It's an overland journey of some hundreds of miles, through a wild country, and, in the present unsettled state of affairs, is out of the question."

"Then we are as far from him as ever."

"By no means. This place will be his headquarters. Someone may be going his way any day, and we can then send him word of our presence. That will bring him here at once. Don't worry. We'll succeed yet."

## CHAPTER XII.

It was a queer scene that met the gaze of Jack and his friends as they proceeded in the direction of the flag so suddenly unfolded to their view. The bunting waved defiantly from the top of a tall tree, the branches of which had been lopped off so as to convert it into a permanent flagstaff. Beneath the shadow of the flag were clustered two odd-looking structures, one of corrugated iron, the other a native hut. To the newcomers, this little settlement in the heart of a wilderness seemed at first like a figment of their imagination. only sign of life about the place was the presence of a couple of Kaffirs at the door of the little iron house. They gazed stupidly at Jack and Harrington, who had ridden ahead to make inquiries regarding the presence of the British flag in this obscure corner of the world, and, in response to the gestures of the visitors, disappeared into the house to summon the occupants. Presently one

of the latter made his appearance. He had evidently been awakened from a sound sleep, for he came to the door in a semi-negligee costume, rubbing his eyes and apparently not understanding for what purpose his black servant had disturbed him.

"Hallo!" he cried, staring in surprise at the sight of the two visitors. "Strangers? And white men, too! Welcome, friends," he continued, recovering from his surprise and delightedly grasping their hands. "Welcome to Castle Vic-Won't you dismount and accept our hospitality? Do! By the way, I haven't introduced myself. Henry Alexander, at your service, Englishman by birth, and adventurer by choice. Out here in search of the golden fleece and not particular whether we find it on the backs of our sheep or in a paying streak of quartz. Come in and meet my fellow fortune-hunters. They're not awake yet, but I'll rout them out. We sat up rather late last night, playing cards and drinking whiskey, which is our chief diversion, with the result that we're not as chipper as usual, this morning. Jenkins, oh, Jenkins!" he bawled, as he led

the way into the little house, following it up with, "Sandy, oh, Sandy!"

A duet of grunts betrayed the fact that a tier of bunks on one side of the large room, which formed the only apartment in the place, had two occupants, and after considerable grumbling a pair of pajamahed figures gazed with sleepy astonishment at the visitors, and finally managed to reach a standing position. Alexander roared with laughter at the absurd appearance of his friends. "Mr. Arthur Jenkins and Mr. David Sanderson, gentlemen," he managed to articulate, between gasps of laughter. The two sleepy figures bowed, and then advanced to emphasize the introduction with a hearty hand clasp.

"I'll say for them that we're glad to see you," continued Alexander. "They'd say so if they could think of the words and their tongues were not so thick. The fact is, that we've all got what is generally known as a dark brown taste in our mouths, this morning. But, come, make yourselves at home."

"It might be well for us to introduce ourselves," remarked Jack. "My friend here is Frank Har146

rington, an American. My name is John Derrington, an Englishman, like yourselves. I may add that our purpose in coming to this country is exactly the same as your own."

"Well, I hope you'll have better luck than we have had," replied Alexander. "We haven't paid expenses since we've been here. I don't know as that is the fault of the country, however. I fancy we're largely to blame ourselves. We've mixed up too much card-playing and whiskey with our proposed, or supposed, work. We're down to our last case of square-faced gin now, and I believe it will be a good thing for us, from a business point of view, when even the last bottle is gone. Then we'll feel the necessity of doing some real work, for diversion, if for no other reason."

- "How long have you been here?" asked Jack.
- "Nearly a year now," replied Alexander.
- "You seem to be very comfortably situated," Jack continued, glancing around the room.

"Yes; we do pride ourselves that we are pretty well fixed, all things considered. See our piano? Take a good look at it. It will be the last one you'll see for many a day, unless you have in-

cluded one in your outfit. We were bound to have all the comforts of home, or as many as it would be possible to transport here, so we hauled the piano up here, and it has been our salvation during many a dull period."

Alexander also called attention to the pictures which hung on the walls and to some beautiful rugs on the floor.

"Sandy doesn't live with us," he continued.
"His æsthetic tastes run in a different groove from ours, so he fixed up for himself that native hut next door. Last night he was unable to find his way home, so we put him up for the night."

While they were chatting in this friendly fashion the outfit and the other members of Jack's party arrived. McDonald and Pat were greeted as effusively as Jack and Harrington had been. The oxen were "outspanned," and the host insisted that the visitors should be their guests for three or four days, at the least. It was a memorable visit. The hosts were genial fellows, and what with drinking and smoking, an occasional game of cards, and several hunting expeditions the days were altogether too short.

"These Boer neighbors of yours are not a very friendly lot," Jack happened to remark, recalling some of the experience of his trip, and thereby opening a sore spot in every Englishman's heart. "They seem to have a special dislike for all Englishmen."

"Yes, the beggars; they hate us worse than they hate the devil. Did you have an encounter with any of them?"

"Well, one of our oxen became footsore, so we took him out of the yoke and got along without him for a while. One day we encountered a steep hill, and as the poor beasts were not quite equal to the task of hauling up the wagon, I rode back to a Boer farm which we had passed an hour before, to ask for the assistance of a yoke of oxen. I was willing to pay for the service, but the old chap refused me, and when I told him I was English, in response to his direct question, he refused me even more emphatically than before—wouldn't have anything to say to me in fact. When I returned to the wagon and told my partners of the failure of my mission, Harrington laughed and volunteered to get the oxen without any trouble.

And he did. He went back to the same old farmer, told him he was an American, gave him a bit of flattery, and returned with two fine yoke of oxen, in charge of a couple of Kaffirs who were instructed to take us a day farther on our trip, and then bring the extra oxen back home. Not only that, but Harrington brought back some fresh eggs and a couple of fat chickens, which the farmer had given him. He refused payment of any kind for the courtesy, too."

Alexander and the others laughed heartily as Jack described his discomforture. "He was a good sample of the whole tribe," he commented. "If they take a fancy to you, there's nothing in the world they won't do for you, but if they dislike you—Ugh!—they can be absolutely dirty in their treatment. No Englishman is welcomed. He is regarded as an intruder whose one idea is to dispossess them and take away from them the centre of their tuppenny government. No matter how decent a fellow may be, or how honorable his motives, if he's an Englishman, that settles his character in their eyes. Well, we don't have any of them across the river here—that's one consolation."

It seemed to the visitors as if they never could leave Castle Victoria, so much was there in the way of entertainment and instruction for them.

"Our live stock is practically no trouble to us," explained Alexander, as he and Jack drove over a section of the grant of the Englishman. "Our niggers look out for them. The country is fertile in spots and supplies them with plenty of food and water. You will have no trouble in getting enough to stock your place from the natives farther up, but you will need to be canny in bargaining with them, because they're a shrewd lot. However, I fancy you'll be able to make a dicker with them. If the rinderpest doesn't strike you, you will find your herds increasing rapidly, and you can devote much of your own spare time to seeing if there is any gold under your feet."

"Rinderpest? What's that?"

"Oh, that's a disease of the cattle! It's tough when it comes, but it may not reach you at all. Anyhow, there's no sense in worrying about it. There's nothing you can do to ward it off."

"And the market?"

"Oh, there will be a demand for all you can

raise, and at prices which will make the venture worth while, even if you do not succeed in finding gold. You see, everybody here is crazy to find gold or diamonds, and those Dutchmen furnish practically everything in the line of food that is not imported. You can drive your stuff to Pretoria, or Johannesburg, or Mafeking, and be sure of finding a market."

"But don't you keep in touch with the outside world at all?"

"Oh, to be sure! Of course we don't have tram cars, and electric lights, and telephones, and all that sort of thing, but we have our mail sent to Fort Tuli, and when one of us goes down for supplies, which we do every couple of months, we get our mail and a stock of newspapers and general reading matter. I tell you, this life gives me an appreciation of the value of something to read. We fairly devour the newspapers, even to the advertisements."

"Now about the natives? Are they trouble-some?"

"Not at all. They have been taught to mind their own business. Those who have come in

contact with us have been very friendly. Keep a sharp eye on your own niggers. They're only one degree removed from savagery, but with a careful combination of kindness and firmness, you'll have no trouble with them."

The last night of the visitors' stay was devoted to what Alexander described as a howling jamboree. He took his place at the piano, and the others joined hands around the room and roared out choruses until the very air seemed startled at the unusual commotion. In the morning Jack and his companions took their departure.

"Well, 'twill not be for long," said Alexander, as he and the other two hosts bade them farewell, after having ridden several miles with them as an escort. "We're neighbors. Your camp will be only about forty miles away, and we'll drop over and pay you a visit as soon as you are settled."

# CHAPTER XIII.

"Well, here we are," said Harrington, one morning five weeks after their departure from Johannesburg. "Accordin to the plans given you I should say that we had now reached the location of your grant."

"I think you are right," replied Jack. "The country corresponds to all descriptions—yes, there is the little stream of water mentioned in it," he added, pointing to a small river, a mile or so away.

"Good!" responded Harrington. "We will make our camp there, near that clump of eucalyptus trees. There is a good grazin' ground for the cattle, down there by the river, and also plenty of water, much needed in this country. There are times when some of us didn't think so, but we kin do without 'most anythin' else, exceptin' water."

"Yes; it's good for bathin' purposes, I'm tould," chimed in Pat, quizzically.

"What are you speakin' from, hearsay or experience?" asked Harrington.

"Faith, a little o' both," was the quick reply.

"Here's our camp site," announced Harrington, a half hour later, after having made a reconnaisance on horseback. "This little knoll is the best spot within five miles. There's a nice, dry elevation here, we'll get a little shade from the trees, and we're handy to the stream for water. Outspan," he yelled to the Kaffirs, after Jack had assented to the proposition. "Now for business," he added, after that operation had been quickly completed, and the oxen had been turned loose in the luxuriant meadow bounding both sides of the stream. "The fust thing to do is to build some kind of a shack for ourselves, an' I move we delegate that job to the Kaffirs. They kin build us one o' their native huts in short order, an' then they can build another for themselves, if they want to. In the mean time they can sleep under the wagon. That'll make a good camp for them. We'll want somethin' better, for I, for one, am tired of sleepin' in a tent. My constitooshun is a bit delicate for these cool, misty nights."

"Mine too," added Pat. "If ye've got a feather bed in yer valise, I wish ye'd turn it over to me. The novelty of the situation of sleepin' like a civilized bein' would be appreciated by yours truly." And he made a grandiloquent bow.

"You'll be lucky if you get the soft side of a board, Irish," retorted Harrington drily.

The Kaffirs made short work of the task assigned them. Inside of two days they had completed one of their conical huts built of reeds bound with withes, and thatched with some of the coarse, heavy grass which grew in wild confusion on the veldt. The white men supervised the operation, and suggested a couple of apertures for windows, a luxury which was entirely overlooked in the plans of their dusky architects. They knew nothing, and cared less, about such subjects as ventilation, and the door, considered by them simply as a necessity for egress and ingress, was the only aperture they had allowed for. While building some rough bunks the white men of the party slept on skins spread on the floor. The Kaffirs stretched themselves, as heretofore, under the wagon.

"'Tisn't a feather bed," commented Pat, as he arose the next morning, "but 'tis a danged sight betther than sleepin' in a tent. 'Tis rain proof, for one thing. Ye're not apt to wake up in the mornin' and find yerself swimmin' about in four foot of wather, anyway."

"So you don't like to go in swimmin' with yer clothes on?" queried Harrington, recalling an incident of the trip from Johannesburg, when, a rain storm threatening, Pat had been set to work to dig a trench around the tent to carry off the water. Instead of throwing the earth against the tent and making a protecting embankment, he had thrown it away from the tent, and when the storm broke, during the night, Pat, who slept on the side next the trench, awoke to find himself lying in a miniature lake.

"Faith, I don't," answered Pat. "'Tis bad enough to have to take a bath, even when you've got time to take yer clothes off, but 'tis the divil an' all when ye get a duckin' in the middle o' the night, an' there's no way to stop the flow o' wather in yer tub. Never fear, 'tis a long time till I take such another."

There was no lack of food in the camp. Game they found in abundance, springbok and plover being particularly plentiful, and with this meat and the canned goods they had provided in Johannesburg they were able to live "like kings," as Pat expressed it. He had been delegated as cook for the white men of the expedition, and with the assistance of one of the blacks, he filled the position admirably.

"Now the next thing is to get some live stock," said Harrington, after the preliminaries of the camp had been arranged. "An' I move that you an' me take a couple of our blacks, an' strike off in search of some of the native tribes, an' buy some of their cattle and sheep. The Englishmen said that we'd have no trouble in makin' a dicker, an' we might as well begin operations at once. Mac and Pat, with the assistance o' the other blacks, kin take care o' the camp while we are gone, an' also finish up the work to be done."

That suggestion was adopted without delay. Inside of a week they returned, driving a hundred head of cattle and twice as many sheep, which

they had purchased from one of the native tribes, after a little parleying, coupled with some sharp bargaining, for the natives knew a trick or two of the game, too.

The cattle and sheep were set to graze along the valley, with the black boys as herders, and then for another week the routine of the new life was unbroken. In the mean time the camp was beautified and a little touch here and there had made the hut more and more homelike.

The only extraordinary incident of the first month occurred one afternoon, about a month after their arrival.

"What th' divil is this at all, at all?" queried Pat, who was the first to notice it. "Is it a thunderstorm comin', I don't know."

He pointed in a westerly direction, and, sure enough, the phenomenon bore a strange resemblance to such an atmospheric possibility. The sky was being obscured by a black cloud which advanced steadily and with great rapidity until it finally darkened the sun. The Kaffirs retreated within the wagon, with the exception of the two herding the cattle, who rapidly drove their flocks

and herds on to the high land and among the rocks.

"Locusts, by gosh!" ejaculated Harrington, after taking a steady look at the approaching cloud. "Let's get inside the hut. Those fellows 'll eat us out o' house an' home, if we don't see that everything is securely covered."

In the mean time the swarm had reached them and had settled down on everything within sight. They obscured the sun and covered the ground as far as the eye could reach. Nothing could be done to check them until they chose to depart, which they did within an hour, as suddenly as they had come. The transformation they had worked in that brief space of time was remarkable.

"Well, may the divil fly away with them," was Pat's blessing, as he peeped out of the hut and looked first at the surrounding country and then at the disappearing swarm. "Faith, they've licked the platther clean. I wonder why they didn't ate us up, too."

"Guess they would have," retorted Harrington,
"if you had been outside so they could have seen
what a beautiful green morsel you are."

"Faith, they'd have found me mighty tough pickin', I'm thinkin', but I wouldn't wondher at all, at all, so I wouldn't, when I look at the sight o' that grass beyant."

He pointed to the valley which a few hours before had been a field of waving grass, but which was now as brown as the hills beyond. It seemed as if they had carried away every spear of grass on the place, while the trees were like skeletons, bereft of every leaf.

"They're one of the plagues of the country," explained Harrington. "They don't come very often, but when they come, they come, as the feller said. I've seen 'em get inter a field an' take every bloomin' thing above ground. Well, never mind," he added, philosophically, "we may have rain in a day or two, an' then that grass'll sprout up so quick that we'll never miss it. In the mean time we'll have to send the niggers farther down the country with the animals."

In spite of the novelty of the situation, Jack found himself sinking into frequent fits of homesickness. Away down deep in his heart, overcoming his efforts to dispossess it, there lived a con-

stant remembrance which refused to be ejected. It was the devotion he felt for a woman, who, he argued, could never be more to him than she was During the long trip from Johannesburg the excitement, the novelty of the ever-changing panorama, and the necessity for constant activity, tended to relieve his memory from the thoughts of her. This was also true during the first few days following his arrival at the camp, but now—now -as he gazed across the broad expanse of rolling country, watched the cattle in the valley, or dreamed of the possibilities of the future, her image blurred every view and refused to depart. He tried to argue with himself the hopelessness of the situation, the impossibility of realizing his dreams concerning her, and the folly of permitting her to enter his thoughts, and then he would yield to the impulse to take a look at the smiling photograph he carried in a little case suspended by a cord from his neck.

He thought these dreams were secrets from his companions, but Harrington had wormed out of Pat the confirmation of a private theory the Yankee held, and he was constantly suggesting little trips

with the idea of cheering up "the boss," as he called him. These were partially successful, but not wholly so. During the excitement of a hunting trip Jack so far forgot himself as to become enthusiastic with a singleness of purpose, but again he would relapse into a quiet melancholy.

"There ought to be some gold in this country," said Harrington, one day. "I've watched carefully along the bank of the stream, but I haven't been able to find a speck yet. I move we make a strike for the hills, one o' these days. We ought to explore this territory thoroughly, an' the sooner the better. I don't want to stay here if we've got to depend on the cattle an' sheep for a fortune. That's sure enough, but life's altogether too short."

One day Jack saw Harrington approach a bluff which showed an outcropping of rock, and make several passes with his hammer. Jack waited, a little way off, resting on his horse and gazing with entire indifference at his companion, who carefully examined something in his hand and then struck several more blows. Then he struck more rapidly

and more forcibly, and when he turned to call Jack there was an excited glitter in his eyes.

"There's some gold here!" he cried, his whole manner changed by the discovery. "See! Look at that dull streak in the rock. That's the genuine article. How much there is there I don't know, but it's gold all right, an' I wouldn't be surprised if we had struck a payin' streak. See this, an' this," he added, again striking with his hammer and holding up chips of quartz which he had knocked from the ledge. "It'll be slow work gettin' it out without the proper machinery, but there's enough there to make us all rich, an' we can get at some of it now. At last! At last!" he cried, whacking away in his excitement, which almost became a mad delirium.

Jack carefully examined some of the specimens handed him, but he saw nothing in them to excite him to a corresponding pitch of enthusiasm. He was inclined to regard Harrington as too sanguine.

"Are you sure that's gold?" he asked.

"Sure? Holy smoke! I'd like to be as sure of gettin' into Heaven," was the excitedly earnest

reply. "Sure? Well, I've seen millionaires made out o' stuff that didn't look half as good as that."

And he whacked, until the approach of nightfall suggested to Jack that it would be well for them to retrace their steps to the camp, which they did, although the fever burned so strongly within Harrington that he was loath to leave his new find, and only agreed to depart on a promise from Jack that they would return there in the morning.

When they reached the camp they found visitors awaiting them in the persons of their three friends from Castle Victoria.

"We're on our way to join Dr. Jim," they explained. "We enlisted in his police to break the monotony occasionally, as well as to contribute to the safety of the place, and we have received word that there's fun afoot, so we thought we'd go down and see what the nature of it was. You'd better join us," Alexander continued. "It will be great sport for you, and besides, you need something to cheer you up. They've been telling us that you've been dumpish for the past few days. I'll bet a girl is at the bottom of it all. Come, now, don't

try to bluff us. You blush so loudly that we can almost hear you. Come, join us," he continued, placing his hand on Jack's shoulder. "It will be great sport."

Jack explained the nature of their find during the day's exploration, and showed the specimens he had brought back to the camp.

"Harrington says it's gold," he said, "and if that's the case we ought to try and get all we can without delay."

"It's gold, without question," replied Alexander, after a careful scrutiny, "but if it's in that form it will be a slow job getting it out. You'll need machinery to work to advantage. Come, join us on this trip, and we'll find some one who will be interested in the discovery, and who will assist you to get the necessary capital and equipment. In the mean time Harrington and McDonald and Pat can investigate the find and ascertain if there's really a vein worth working."

Harrington joined his persuasions to those of the three Englishmen and assured Jack that he would stay and make a careful examination of the find, and be ready to make a definite report on

"the boss's" return, which Alexander said would be within a month, at any rate.

Jack found himself wavering between two minds, but he finally yielded to the arguments and importunities of the visitors, and agreed to go with them. Early the next morning they saddled their horses. Pat did likewise.

"Where are you going, Pat?" Jack asked, in surprise.

"Wherever you go, sur," was the calm response.

"But you're to stay here."

"Faith, I'm not, sur—av ye plaze, sur. I'm no good here, an' I may be of some sarvice to yersel'. Av ye plaze, sur, I'd like to go with you."

Jack laughed at the poor fellow's solicitation and earnestness, and, touched by the genuineness of it, and persuaded by the desires of his companions, he finally acquiesced.

"Well, come on, then. We won't be gone long," he said.

Then they galloped off, with their faces set toward the south. Where they were going they did not know, except that it was with Dr. Jim. The

rumor had it that some of the blacks had risen along the line of the railroad and were threatening trouble. It was the desire of the protectorate interest to subdue this annoyance; hence the call on the police, regulars and volunteers. The little cavalcade looked upon it as a light adventure, promising possible temporary excitement, but they little dreamed that they were to become actors in a drama which would interest the whole civilized world and make their names household words.

# CHAPTER XIV.

IT was fast approaching night, when, a week later, Jack and his companions rode into the Pitsani camp of Dr. Jameson. The fires were lighted and preparations for the evening meal in progress. A motley aggregation gave them a hearty welcome, after they had introduced themselves and explained the object of their visit. Titled youngsters from England, matured army officers with records of hard service in India and Africa, and young Afrikanders rubbed shoulders on terms of comparative equality. A democratic feeling prevailed, such as in the old country would have been absolutely impossible. The squadron was well disciplined, but it was the discipline of privates who had the utmost confidence in their leaders, and of leaders who felt the need of personal reliance upon the good-will and courage of their followers, rather than the stiff discipline of the regular service. To many of those in the camp

169

the discipline of the regular service would have been absolutely distasteful.

"You're just in the nick of time," confidentially murmured one young fellow who was known to Alexander, as he led them to a place for supper. "If you had waited another day you'd have been too late."

"How's that?"

"Haven't you heard?"

"Not a word."

"We start to-morrow morning for Johannesburg."

"For Johannesburg?" all three echoed in surprise.

Their conductor nodded his head with the air of one who could a tale unfold.

"Haven't you heard anything at all?" he asked, eyeing them curiously.

"Not a whisper. Come, let us in. What is it you're driving at?"

"Well, we're supposed to be starting out to watch the niggers who are suspected of planning a raid against the railroad, you know." His auditors nodded. "But we're not doing anything of

the sort," he continued. "The cat was let out of the bag, this afternoon. We're going to Johannesburg to help the Outlanders, who are going to rise up against the Boers. They've been getting ready for weeks and weeks and they have sent word that they would like us to go over and take a hand in behalf of the women and children. The letter was read to us to-day, and most of us volunteered to go. Some of the boys had cold feet when the matter was broached, because we did not have official authorization, but most of us said we'd go."

"And after you get there, what?"

"Oh, that's a matter that will settle itself. We've got to help out our own countrymen. They're fighting for their rights. After we reach there we'll determine what is next to be done. The main thing is to get there."

"But how do you purpose doing that? Riding across country?" asked Alexander.

The other nodded.

"But, my dear fellow, what are the Boers going to be doing in the mean time? Do you think for a moment that they are going to let

you into Johannesburg without attempting to stop you?"

"Oh, that's all been arranged!" was the confident reply. "In the first place, we do not intend that they shall be informed, in advance, of our intentions. We ought to be into Johannesburg, or very near it, before the Boers awake to the fact of our visit, and then if they attempt to stop us we'll have to fight our way through."

"And suppose you have more of a fight than you bargain for?"

"Never fear. There's an army corps of armed and determined men in Johannesburg who will be ready to come out and help us—that is, if we need any help."

"And when do you expect to reach there?"

"Let's see. To-morrow is the 29th. Why, we ought to be in Johannesburg on New Year's Day, if all goes well. It isn't more than a hundred and fifty or sixty miles, and we ought to make it in three days, with any kind of speed. We're going in light marching order, too. Those were the directions. Instead of a lot of extra clothing we're going to carry a lot of extra ammunition,

taking only such wearing apparel as we absolutely need. We'll get all we want in the way of clothing after we have reached Johannesburg. Come, you're with us, of course. Think of an Englishman refusing a request to aid women and children simply because a little red tape stands in the way! If you could have heard that letter read, this afternoon, your blood would have boiled. I know you fellows are to be counted on," he added, leading them to a seat, as if to say that no further argument was needed to insure the enlistment of four additional recruits.

The visitors accepted this settlement of the matter without offering any argument. It was not the course they had in mind when they started from their ranches, but they were not at all indisposed to join in the movement. The company in which they found themselves was very pleasant, doubly so from the fact that they had spent several weeks in comparative solitude, and the attraction of song and story in the camp probably assisted them in coming to a conclusion. After supper the troopers gathered into little groups and there was a general spinning of yarns. The one pre-

dominant chord in their conversation was the universal confidence they felt in Dr. Jameson. They did not discount the difficulties which they knew were possible, but they felt sure that wherever he led success would eventually meet them.

"I remember him when he was a sawbones at Kimberley," said one strapping fellow, who had seen service in several climates, and at the sound of whose voice an appreciative group gathered about him. "That was several years ago, long before he had entered the colonial service or had any such idea. He and Rhodes kept a joint bachelors' hall, and both were making money, hand over fist. Rhodes knew the stuff the little Scotchman was made of, and after old Lobengula had refused to let Rhodes into Matabeleland, Jameson asked Rhodes to let him try it."

The narrator stopped to puff a red glow into the bowl of his pipe and then continued: "The old king was a crafty chap. He had a big army at his back, and he was as independent as a hog on ice. One or two of those who tried to get concessions from him were glad enough

when he conceded them the privilege of getting away with whole skins. But that didn't scare Jameson. He got three or four comrades and started for old Lo's headquarters. Just what he would do when he got there, he didn't know. He would make his plans when he got on the ground. Get there he did, but it was a devil of a task. They were all taken sick with fever, and at one time it looked as if they would die in the wilderness, but they finally pulled through. Jameson's luck was with him all the way, and it stayed with him when he reached Lo's palace. The old king was very sick. He was suffering from a fever, and the medicine men couldn't help him any, although they pow-wowed for days and days. Now, Dr. Jim had made a specialty of fevers, and when he heard of the king's illness, he sent in word that he was a doctor and could help him. I tell you, it was a mighty ticklish proposition for him. If he failed to cure him, the medicine men would have taken his head off quicker than that," snapping his fingers to emphasize the act. "But he didn't fail. The old king got well, and he was so grateful that he would have given Jameson any-

thing he asked. Jameson asked permission to explore the country, and he got it, as well as several fine presents, and out of that incident came the occupation of the whole country."

"Were you with him? asked a listener.

"No, I wasn't with him," responded the other, "but I was at Kimberley when he returned, and I heard the whole story at that time. I know it to be true. Rhodes was so tickled that he made Jameson his right-hand man, and ever since that time Jameson has been with Rhodes. He gave up his practice and took charge of the country as administrator under the Chartered Company."

"Oh, he's got nerve!" chimed in another trooper. "I was with him, after that, when he licked about seven hundred Portuguese and niggers with a little troop of less than fifty men. The Portuguese, you know, have been very jealous of our achievements in this part of the world, and have been trying to enlarge the strip of territory they hold on the west coast. There has always been a dispute as to the exact border lines of the two territories, and a few years ago they undertook to claim possession of a bit of Rhodesia. It

looked as if they were going to succeed, too, because they had a force of nearly two hundred Portuguese soldiers, backed up by five hundred friendly natives. Jameson heard of their move and gathered together a few of us and started to head them off. We made a forced march and occupied a hill covering the route of the Portuguese column. We had a couple of Maxim guns which we placed in position, and then we sat down and waited for the Portuguese to come up. You ought to have seen them stare when they sighted that kopje! They suspected what the difficulty was, and their commander came forward to palayer. The commander wanted to know if Dr. Jim was aware that he was on Portuguese territory. Dr. Jim very politely replied that he did not so understand it, but on the contrary was quite sure that that was English territory. The Portuguese commander, with equal politeness, insisted that Dr. Jim was mistaken, and added that he would be compelled to ask him to retreat into his own country. Dr. Jim said that retreat was out of the question, whereat the Portuguese man got mad and told him that if he didn't retreat he would be obliged to

compel him to do so, that is, if there was anything left of him after his Portuguese and niggers had finished with him. The Portuguese officer looked back into the valley where his force had halted, as if to call Dr. Jim's attention to the fact that they outnumbered us more than ten to one, and added that resistance against such odds would be unavailing and that if there was a fight we would probably be wiped off the earth. They talked and talked, and finally the discussion became pretty hot. Dr. Jim and his backers insisted that we were going to stay right there, and the Portuguese officer went off swearing that he would drive us out even if he had to kill every one of us. He started in to do so, but in about ten minutes he had changed his mind. As soon as his party made a rush at the hill, firing as fast as they could, we opened up on them with our rapid-fire guns, and mowed them down so fast that they were glad to scoot away and leave us in possession of the place. We killed and wounded about fifty of their number, and after it was all over Dr. Jim went down and helped to dress the wounds of some of those who a few minutes be-

fore he had fired upon as enemies. We didn't lose a man."

The recital of these reminiscences seemed to invite others.

"That wasn't as big a bluff as the one he worked on the Boers about five years ago," said a stocky little fellow who was puffing away at a short black pipe, as he lay at full length on the ground, resting his head on his elbow. "We had received word of a great Boer trek to the north. They had laid claim to an immense tract of country in Matabeleland, under some old treaty with the natives, and were on their way to take possession when Dr. Iim heard of it and went out to meet them. He learned where they intended to cross the Limpopo and laid in wait for them at the other side. He had only a handful of men, and a few guns, but he was determined to stop them, somehow. Along they came, six or seven thousand of them, and stopped on the near side of the river. They didn't like the looks of things on the opposite side, for Dr. Jim had placed his men in a strong position and his guns were mounted so as to say 'How d'e do' with emphasis. Some of them came across the

river to have a talk, and explained that their mission was a peaceful one. Dr. Jim wouldn't have it, however. He said if they came at all it would be by permission of the Chartered Company, and that for the present such permission would not be granted. The Boers kicked, of course, and threatened to cross, with or without permission, but they finally turned tail and went back without attempting to call his bluff."

"Queer that both he and Rhodes should be bachelors, isn't it?" mused one who had so far contributed nothing.

"Why so?" asked another, bristling as if resenting the remark. "If they had wives and children tagging after them they wouldn't be where they are to-day."

"That may be; but even to-day they might choose the best in the land and be sure of getting 'yes' for an answer."

"They know when they're well off," grunted the other.

"Rhodes came precious near it once," continued the first speaker. "Didn't you ever hear about it?" he asked, as the others pricked up their ears.

"Well, it was years ago, when he was a youngster just beginning to make some money, and likewise a name for himself. He was paying attentions to a girl who also had another admirer. She liked the other fellow better than she did Rhodes, but her parents saw that Rhodes was going to make a name for himself and they wanted her to marry him. She finally decided to do as they wanted her to do, although she did not let Rhodes know the whole story. One night the other fellow called, and she told him just how the land lay. The girl cried and the fellow felt pretty badly about it, but he was game and told the girl that he would not stand in her way. Then he took her in his arms and kissed her.

"Just then who should come along but Rhodes. As he was going up the steps he saw the tableau through the window. He sized up the situation at a glance. No one ever found out just how he took it. Some said he realized the situation as it actually existed and made up his mind that he would not hinder the girl from getting the fellow she wanted. Others said he felt that the other fellow had the inside track and that there was no

use for him to try. At any rate, with his hand almost on the doorknob he turned and walked away. That's the reason he never married. Kind of a sad romance, wasn't it?"

"Come, you fellows," bawled a lusty trooper walking through the camp, "are you going to talk all night. Lights out! D'ye hear? There's work to be done to-morrow, and talking to-night won't do it. See that your horses are all right and get to bed. You'll need all the sleep you can get before you reach Johannesburg. Come, now, scat!"

In a few minutes the camp was silent, save for an occasional snore. To most of them sleep came as readily as if the morrow promised nothing more exciting than a short ride across country, but to Jack the story of the last sleeper brought a fresh twinge of the heart. Could it be that Muriel was really in love with some other fellow? he asked himself. The doubt played havoc with him for a few minutes, but in spite of it he pulled a little locket from around his neck and pressed his lips to it.

# CHAPTER XV.

It had been an anxious day for Dr. Jameson and the other leaders of the proposed expedition. The letter from the people of Johannesburg had stirred their blood, and their hearts beat in lively sympathy with the appeal. Was the time ripe, however? That was the question. This was a delicate matter. To communicate directly by telegraph was impossible—that is, to communicate without running the risk of having their messages intercepted by the Boers. They were compelled to rely, therefore, for information as to events in Johannesburg, on the messages which came from Cecil Rhodes at Cape Town.

"Hang it all," exclaimed one impatient subordinate. "What's the use of waiting here from day to day. We have already delayed longer than is safe. We can't hope to keep up the idea that we are simply watching the railroad line. The Boers are not fools, and the first thing we

know they will have stepped into Johannesburg and all our plans will go up in smoke."

The little Scotch leader smiled at the other's irritation.

"What would you do?" he asked.

"Do? Ride over there and get into the place before it is too late."

"And then?"

"And then? Why, then take the bull by the horns."

"Yes, but the bull may toss you. First make sure that you are right," was the canny rejoinder.

"But aren't we in the right? Could there be anything more convincing than the letter you have received?"

"Very true, but how do we know that the Johannesburg people are ready to receive us. There is a prospect of hot work, and their assistance is absolutely essential. We had better wait until we hear from Rhodes. He will wire us the moment the proper time has arrived."

"Huh!" grunted another. "How do we know that he is able to hear from Johannesburg any more than we are. It is as dangerous to wire in

one direction as in another, and now that the object of the expedition has been declared to the men it is dangerous for us to remain here. Some of them have refused to go, and delay simply means that the news will soon reach Pretoria. Then the jig is up for the people in Johannesburg, as well as for our own plans."

"But you haven't considered the entire situation. There are well-founded rumors of disagreements among the people of Johannesburg as to the proper method to pursue. It would be the height of folly to enter a divided house."

"Disagreements! Faugh! The trouble is that they have no one competent to act as a leader. Take us in there, then assume command of the city yourself, and the fight is won. We must go either one way or the other. We can't stay here. The Boers are not so dense as to believe that we are here for the purpose of controlling niggers who are not in any danger of rising. And if we don't go pretty soon I'm afraid that some of the boys will go without us. They are hot at the reports of the treatment of our friends in Johannesburg."

Jameson explained the necessity for delay, but some of the younger men still insisted that an immediate start ought to be made, and finally, after waiting until evening without receiving any further message from Rhodes, he decided that the start should be made the next day.

"Well, the die is cast," he said grimly, as the column was accordingly set in motion. "Word has been sent to the boys at Mafeking to meet us at Malmani to-morrow morning. It will be a hard ride, but we may get through in safety. At any rate, we'll make the effort."

Jack experienced a sense of tumultuous exhilaration, as he gazed on the galloping contingent of which he found himself so unexpectedly a part. They traversed the flat open country with rapidity, although their progress was somewhat impeded by the presence of a half score of Maxim guns and seven-pounders, not to speak of several wagons. All day long they proceeded, and nightfall offered no respite.

"We ought to be just about entering the Transvaal," remarked one of the officers, late in the evening.

186

"Yes, we have crossed the Rubicon," answered Jameson with a confident smile. "Come what may, we must now go ahead. It is too late to turn back. We might as well be hung for an old sheep as for a lamb," he added philosophically, "and so long as we have put one foot over the line we might as well drag the other one after, and make our steps as rapid as possible."

"Whew! Egad! this is work," Alexander exploded, as he slipped off his tired horse at day-break, when the troop had reached the little village of Malmani, for the purpose of preparing breakfast and waiting for the force due to arrive from Mafeking.

Jack, walking about to limber up his stiff legs, acquiesced with a smile. "Yes, and to think that we've got two days more of it," he good-naturedly grumbled.

"Where are those fellows from Mafeking?" asked another. "Are they going to delay the game?"

"Oh, don't be in such a confounded hurry," grunted another, stealing a few winks of sleep as he threw himself on the ground. "Enjoy

yourself while you can. You'll be a long time dead."

"Ho! here they come now," announced a third, pointing to a black mass just discernible across the veldt. At first it looked like a big black ship bobbing up and down in a choppy sea, but after a time the irregular motion of the whole body began to distribute itself into individual gallopers, and soon the recruits were bearing down on the Pitsani delegation. The new arrivals were greeted with cheers, and they responded to the salute in kind.

Everybody was in high feather while preparations for breakfast were in progress.

"Well, now we're off in earnest," said Jameson to some of those who had urged him to start the day before. "The wires have been cut before us and behind. The Boers will have some difficulty in telegraphing news of our visit, and we don't want to hear from Cape Town for several days to come. Let us not waste time now. The quicker we go the less danger there will be of them heading us off. By making reasonable haste we ought to reach Johannesburg on New Year's Day."

"Let us hope it will be a happy New Year for

us all," remarked one of the officers, as he mounted his horse for another advance.

"Och! I feel as if me legs were sphlit up to the back o' me neck," groaned Pat, as he dismounted from his horse at sunset. "An' no shleep to-night, they tell me. Faith, I'll fall ashleep in me saddle. I'm so afeared I'll shnore that I dare not wink for fear I'll not be able to lift me blinkers agin."

They made occasional halts for rest and food, but there was practically no sleep for any of them. They had now been two nights on the road, and it was clear that some sleep was necessary, no matter how urgent their arrival at Johannesburg. The announcement was therefore made that that night six hours' sleep would be allowed.

"Six hours?" was Pat's good-natured grumble. "Faith, that'll be only an aggervation. I feel as if I could sleep until doomsday."

"By Gad, but you may do that, too," retorted his neighbor, as a rifle shot rang out on the night air, followed by several others. The location of the shooters could be determined only by the flashes here and there behind bowlders on an ad-

jacent kopje. "This is a nightmare that promises to disturb your dreams anyway," he continued, as they advanced in the direction of the flashes and chased out the little contingent of Boers.

"Well, the first gun of the campaign has been fired," remarked Jameson, at daybreak. "I am glad we are safely through that pass, but I don't understand how they discovered our presence so quickly. Something has gone wrong. Well, there's no help for it now. We must fight our way through, sleep or no sleep."

But the explanation was simple enough. It was another illustration of the fact that—

"The best-laid plans o' mice and man Gang aft agley."

Jameson supposed that the telegraph wire runing to Pretoria had been cut, but it wasn't. It ought to have been, and the trooper detailed to attend to this important matter believed that he had successfully impeded communication in that direction. He had been instructed to go to a point a few miles beyond the town, chop out several feet of wire, and bury it in an adjacent field.

The plan was a shrewd one. It would take the Boers some time to discover the break, and more time to repair it if the missing section of wire could not be found. All this had been carefully drilled into the trooper's mind and had left an indelible impression there, but instead of disturbing the telegraph wire he carefully hacked out a section of a farmer's wire fence, buried it according to directions, and then reported that he had completed the service assigned him.

Jameson had hardly crossed the border before that interesting fact was flashed to Pretoria. It brought consternation for the moment, but instant preparations were made to head him off. This explains how a party of skirmishers interrupted the expected night's sleep of his men before he was hardly more than half way on his journey. His calculations had missed by at least twenty-four hours. The possibility of an intercepting force had been considered but it was expected that before such a force could be gathered the raiders would be close to Johannesburg, if not actually within the limits of that city. And yet, here they were, fifty miles from that place, facing bullets.

On they pushed during the night, and on through the darkness pushed the various columns of Boers, hastily commandeered for the occasion and ordered to make Krugersdorp their rendezvous. It was calculated that by making that little place the point of the angle they would have time to gather and intercept Jameson.

"I wonder if we'll see the old year out?" asked Alexander, as they munched their breakfast at daybreak on the last day of the year. "There are indications of a storm ahead. I hear that Dr. Jim is looking rather savage this morning. The Boers have gained a lap or two, and it looks as if there would be a fight."

"Oh, never mind," confidently assured another.

"A scout has just come in from Johannesburg and he says that the men there are under arms and are coming to meet us. Oh, we'll make it warm for these Dutchmen if they attempt to interfere any more. What's that? Mount? All right," he cheerily responded, as he vaulted into the saddle, the others following his example.

"There's more trouble ahead," reported Pat,

who had ridden down the line to ascertain the meaning of another halt, late in the forenoon. "There's a lot o' Dutchmen in the hills beyant the town there, an' they're sayin' they won't let us pass."

"Then it means fight," responded Jack, "for there'll be no turn about for this crowd. Hark! By heavens! they are at it already. See, our gunners are shelling the hills."

He pointed to a flash in the valley ahead of them and watched the shell explode above a small hill which flanked the town. For several minutes a lively fire was kept up, but there was no sign of a reply.

"Mount!" yelled Jack. "There's the order. Now there's work for us."

They rode toward the hill in question, but no sign of life manifested itself in opposition to their progress.

"This is a regular picnic," laughed Jenkins.

"Don't be too sure of that," counselled the cautious Sanderson. "You don't know where those chaps may be hiding."

Hardly had the words left his lips before a sheet

of flame burst from behind the rocks on the crown of the hill. For a moment the shock halted the troopers, but the next moment the order to charge rallied them, and up the hill they went, yelling like mad men and firing as fast as they could at the point from which the assault seemed to come. But another fusillade and still another greeted them. Around them their comrades were falling, and the frightened riderless horses added to the panic of the occasion. Ahead of them was a hill, and on the crown of the hill was a natural outcrop of rocks. From behind these rocks came the flashes, and it was apparent that there the Boers held a strong position. How many of them there were no one could tell, and when the question of the value of the position, even if taken, presented itself, the answer was so apparent that a retreat was ordered

"Ye gods, this is terrible," cried Alexander, as he lifted a wounded comrade from the ground and threw him across his saddle. "Several of our fellows are dead and several more dying, and not one of their crowd is hurt. Those shells appear to have gone clean over them."

"Dinner call has sounded," was the information a trooper conveyed, as he rode up to the little group.

"Dinner?" repeated Jack. "Ugh! I want no dinner with dead and dying around me."

"Pshaw! don't be foolish," urged the other, the old trooper who had entertained him with stories of Jameson the night before. "You can't fight unless you eat, and you'll need all the fight that is in you before you get through. Come, eat while you can, for we're shortly going to try and flank that hill and get by the town if possible."

"This getting by seems to be easier said than done," remarked Jack, a couple of hours later, as another hail of bullets met them and sounded a sharp "No Thoroughfare!"

"Back again we go to the other side of the place," rejoined Alexander, turning his horse to suit the action of the words, and obeying the general movement of the column. Here, again, they saw another sobering picture as they met the wagons containing the wounded.

"Ha! things seem to be going better now," announced Jack, riding back to his companoins

later in the afternoon. "See! the whole column is in motion, and a messenger has just come in announcing that the Johannesburg forces are on the way to our assistance."

"Buck up, boys," was the cheering command of one of the officers, riding down the line and confirming this rumor. "Help will reach us before sundown."

"Here they are now," cried Alexander, pointing to a force discernible ahead in the fast approaching dusk.

"Good God!" he added, a few minutes later, "they're firing on us. There's some mistake. Why don't they send word ahead, and not have us shooting one another. Eh?" he asked, as a trooper rode down the lines. "Not the Johannesburg people? More Boers? Well, where the devil are those who were going to come out and help us?"

This was a conundrum which no one could answer. Before, behind, and on all sides it seemed as if the Boers were rising out of the very ground. Darkness set in, supplemented by rain, and the guides were doubtful about the road, so the order

came down to camp for the night. In imitation of the Boers, a laager was formed, with the wagons on the outside of a great circle, but even this did not protect them from their enemies. All night long they poured desultory shots into the camp, finding an occasional human target.

"This is hell itself," remarked Pat. "'Twould be even betther to take chances and thry and break through than to stay here as marks for their popguns." He echoed the sentiments of all those within hearing, but no move was made until morning, when the gray light of dawn outlined the surrounding country. The Maxim guns had kept the Boers at a respectful distance during the night, but when daylight came the enemy was not to be seen, except an occasional detachment moving in the distance.

Doggedly the troopers again advanced, although their tired animals were barely able to stumble along and the riders were completely exhausted. Three nights with scarcely a wink of sleep had left them drawn and haggard, wearied in mind as well as in body, but still animated with a gritty determination to advance at any cost.

"Buck up, boys!" cried Jameson, riding among them and cheering them up with his magnificent optimism. "There's an old farm yonder. Once there, we can hold out until assistance comes, and that is promised us without fail."

On they pushed, replying to an occasional volley from an adjacent kopje, until they dragged their weary bodies within the precincts of the farm and defended themselves from further assault from behind the stone walls of the farmhouse buildings. But still they were not free from danger. From all sides the Boers were gathering, and in spite of the defences supplied by the farm buildings they were pouring in a shower of bullets which found victims here, there, and everywhere.

"Holy smoke!" cried Jack, as a new sound came to his ears. "They've got artillery to help them. Now we are in for it."

"Yes, and our own guns are almost useless," announced Alexander, joining him. "I've just been over there, and they're so warm that they're out of the fight. They've been obliged to cool them with water, and I doubt if they're much good."

But still Jameson cried: "Buck up, boys!" He pointed to a narrow pass in the hills. "There's one road to safety," he added. "We'll try it. To remain here is to be killed like rats in a trap."

Gallantly his little band followed him out of the farm and in the indicated direction. The possibilities of a spirited dash cheered them, and they went forward with a yell of exultation. It changed to one of anger and dismay, a few moments later, when they were met with another hail of bullets from behind the rocks of the rising ground on either side of the defile.

"Charge!" yelled Jameson. With a yell his men complied. Suddenly Jack felt a sharp twinge in his thigh, rolled in his saddle for a moment, and then fell from his horse.

He heard the thud of the hoofs of the horses of his companions; he felt the shock of the recoil which sent them back again; he heard the second order to charge; dreamed that he saw Pat hovering near him; and then sank into unconsciousness.

He realized that the day was lost. Back to the farm rode the repulsed troopers, and he was spared the sight of the white flag rising over its walls to in-

dicate that his friends had surrendered. Unconsciousness was bliss compared to that scene. Doubtless there would have been tears in his eyes, as there were in the eyes of others, had he been a witness to it, but even though wounded almost to death, his condition was blissful compared to that of the high-spirited fellows who had ridden by his side from Pitsani and Mafeking. This was the most intense suffering of all. By comparison, the long, hard ride and the sleepless nights were as trifles. Oh, what a terrible nightmare their dream had become! Not even the fact that their conquerors, instead of jeering at their victory, knelt down and offered prayers of thanksgiving for it. could assuage the wounds in the hearts of the troopers. These were as bitter as death itself.

"Damn those cowards!" cried one young fellow, shaking his fist in the direction he conceived Johannesburg to be. "They deserve to be the slaves they are!"

# CHAPTER XVI.

"Happy New Year!" remarked Muriel sadly, as she lifted the shades of her windows. "Ah, the phrase is a mockery. How hollow the words sound!"

It was indeed hard for her to find any possible pretext for happiness. She was thousands of miles from home and kindred; her friends had departed, and she was practically alone, a stranger in a strange land, and a resident of a city which, in addition to being silenced by a frowning battery on the heights above it, trembled under the foreboding of a threat more distant but momentarily approaching nearer and nearer.

And Jack! Where was he in this crisis? Perpetually dwelt his name on her lips and his memory in her heart. Would she ever see him again, or would the sufferings she had voluntarily undergone be unrewarded by the meeting for which she had hoped and prayed? Hourly the tension in the

city seemed to increase. To all intents and purposes the place was undergoing a siege. Business was completely forgotten. The shops were barricaded, and a kind of martial law prevailed. Instead of the familiar Boer policemen marched armed militiamen. The streets were filled with citizen soldiery, some uniformed, but most of them attired in their usual business costumes.

Would Kruger relent? Would the justice of the demands sent him penetrate his obstinate heart and relieve the strain which threatened to end in blood?

"Wait!" counselled the more cautious. "Wait until the Americans return!"

The Americans had been sent to Pretoria as special envoys to bring about, if possible, a compromise of the conflict which now seemed inevitable. It was out of the question for peaceful relations to be maintained unless some compromise were effected. Armed neutrality was a mockery. On one hill covering the town was a Boer battery. On another hill, a half mile away, was an improvised fortress of Outlanders, whose guns pointed at the battery of the Dutchmen. It needed only

a spark to ignite the combustible wrath of both sides.

"Ha! The Americans!" went up the excited cry, as a train rumbled in from Pretoria. A chattering throng followed the envoys to the doors of the Rand Club, and then a demand went up that the report of the Americans should be publicly announced. A speaker came out on the balcony, and was greeted with cheers. He raised his hand to command silence, and then said that, while the mission had not been entirely satisfactory, there was some ground for hope; the president had promised to consider the matter immediately.

"Bah!" was the excited reply of the throng. "Consider! That's what they have always said. Consider! Let us make them consider. The only way to get any concessions from them is to point a gun at their heads."

The anger of the throng was so terrible that Muriel, who was taking a walk in company with the rector and his wife, turned down a side street to get out of hearing. But to be entirely deaf to such remarks was out of the question. Everywhere they turned they came upon excited groups,

all intent upon a discussion of the same topic, although perhaps of different details.

"Give us liberty or give us death!" shrieked an enthusiastic American to a crowd of applauding listeners who surrounded the soap box which he had converted into a rostrum. "They say they will consider. When? Will it be the next week or the next year? Will it be when some of us are dead and the rest of us in prison? No, I say. Now is the time—now or never."

A fusillade of shots, fired into the air, greeted this remark. During his peroration the excited speaker was swept from his perch by his more excited auditors, and down the street they marched, yelling threats, waving their hats and outlining their intentions by firing repeated volleys.

"Let us make haste slowly," argued a conservative, addressing a gathering of conservatives, mainly shopkeepers, in front of the hotel. "There is nothing to be gained by haste, and everything may be lost. Kruger says he will consider. Give him time. He cannot do everything in a minute. These Dutchmen are slow to move in such matters, and, though he may be willing to do so, it will

take him some time to bring his cabinet to his way of thinking. Besides," the speaker lowered his voice, "the condition of things in the city has reached a dangerous pass, and the danger threatens from within more seriously than it does from without. Some of the miners have taken too much liquor, and they go marching about, shooting in the most reckless fashion. If our shops were not locked, I'm afraid that they would have been looted before now. How much longer it will be before they are broken open, who can tell?"

He looked around the little circle of listeners as if demanding a reply, but none was forthcoming. His hearers seemed filled with the same doubting emotions as himself.

"That's true," rejoined another. "There are hundreds of men here who care nothing for civil rights, or rights of any other kind. They'd as soon steal from us as from the Boers."

Farther along Muriel passed the building which was being used as a place of refuge for the wives and children of the miners, who had come in from the suburbs of the city in order to claim its protection. The faces of the women were wan and anx-

ious. They showed the terrible anxiety they felt for the husbands, brothers and sons marching in the street below, but waiting to be summoned at any moment to meet the Boers in battle. Many of the men were being paid for their services, to be sure, and their dependants were being provided for out of the fund which had been raised by popular subscription; but this fact could not assuage the fears which tugged at the heartstrings of their dear ones.

A messenger mounted on a bicycle whizzed by to announce that Jameson was coming. This announcement evoked another storm of applause, punctuated, as usual, by a volley of shots.

"Hurrah for Jameson!" yelled the crowd.
"Now we are all right. When Jameson gets here,
he'll give these chaps something to think about."

The enthusiasm went up to fever heat, only to be crushed by a telegram from the south, announcing that the train to Durban had been wrecked, and that hundreds had been killed. No particulars were given, beyond the mere fact. How it happened no one could tell, but all knew that it was due to the terrible overcrowding of the cars. This

news brought out a conflict of comment. Those who had relatives or friends aboard stormed the telegraph office for more detailed information. The names of the killed—give them the names, they demanded.

"Served 'em right," was the surly growl of others. "They were willing to run away from the place and leave us to fight it out here. They have none to blame but their own selfishness."

"But their wives and children; surely you do not blame them for sending their wives and children away," remonstrated a bystander, who overheard this cruel remark.

"Hang their wives and children!" retorted the rough miner who had spoken. "My wife and children are here, and they are just as good as those of any other man. Wives and children! Didn't I see dozens of men on that train when it went out? I say wives and children to you! There were white-livered men there, too, and, I say again, it serves 'em right."

But the brave hearts, even among the women, had not all deserted the place, to seek safety in flight. There were many women whose means

would have permitted them to depart, and whose husbands, fathers and brothers urged and begged them to do so, who refused to stir one inch from the place. They established themselves into a hospital corps and began the preparations for the emergency which stared them in the face.

To Muriel it seemed as if that day, instead of being one of happiness, was the forerunner of perpetual misery. She found some comfort in the fact that the wrecked train was the one that followed that containing Lady Stanmore and the rest of her friends; but she felt herself shaking with pity for those who had lost their lives while trying to reach safety. It seemed as if this awful catastrophe only prefaced more portentous events, which would discount even the worst anticipations of those who supposed they had schooled themselves to face the terrible reality.

That night pandemonium reigned. Messengers who had been sent out as scouts, returned to bring back reports of one kind and another, until the air was so thick with rumors that it was impossible to tell what the facts in the case were. Now Jameson was almost within hail of the city; now he had

had a skirmish with the Boers and had won; and now he was quite a distance off, but had outflanked those who would intercept him. The next morning it was even worse. The excitement was so intense that Muriel decided that she would not venture out of the house; but the rector volunteered to go down to the Goldfields Company's office and bring back what news was obtainable. He found the street, for a block from The Chains to the Goldfields office packed with people, prominent among whom were several members of the Reform Committee, and occasionally these gentlemen would announce from the windows of the Goldfields Company's office, to the throng in the street below, such bulletins as were received from messengers.

The same contradictory reports prevailed during the entire forenoon, and finally the bulletins became so awful that the speakers shrunk from the task of making any announcement. Even when an announcement was delivered, it was colored so as not to excite a riot. The gentlemen in the offices paled before the apparent reliability of the latest message. Jameson had been defeated! The

Boers had intercepted him just outside of Krugersdorp, had killed some of his men and captured all the others. And his dispatches had been found, among them the very letter from the committee inviting him and his men to assist them at Johannesburg! In the face of all this, what was to be done? The members of the committee were confronted, not merely with the news of Jameson's defeat and the collapse of their own hopes, but with the terrible suspicion that they would have to pay with their own lives for the complicity in the affair which their letter indicated. But the impatient throng below did not know this.

"What about Jameson?" they cried. "Lead us out and we'll help him, if he needs any help. Speak up! Don't be afraid! We're ready!"

"You tell them," suggested one man, pushing another toward the window.

"No, no; you tell them," the other urged, edging back from the window.

It was clear that the duty must devolve on some one. The rumor had reached the crowd that Jameson had met the Boers, but that he needed assistance. To permit the acceptance of this rumor

would be to immediately organize a command to go out to his assistance. On the other hand, to tell them the whole truth, after the encouraging reports which had been promulgated earlier in the day, would be to bring on a riot. Finally the announcement was made that Jameson had had a skirmish with the Boers, and that, being overpowered, he had conditionally surrendered.

For a moment there was intense silence. Then a yell of rage went up and the walls of the building were threatened.

"Surrendered? Then why didn't you lead us out to help him? Surrendered? O God, and we here waiting for him to come to us! Oh, ye cowards!" threatening the men in the building. "Ye are to blame for all this. Now we're caught like rats in a trap, and, damn us, it serves us right; it serves us right!"

# CHAPTER XVII.

Muriel received the news of the disaster to Jameson and his men without waiting for the rector to return. She was sitting in her room, watching the ebb and flow of the excited tide of humanity below her, when the maid knocked at her door and announced that a visitor desired to see her. She descended to the hall, to find Kooste awaiting her. He was dusty and travel-stained. Across his shoulder was suspended a cartridge belt, which even then Muriel noticed was partly empty, and on his arm was slung a rifle. He bowed in acknowledgment of her presence, and greeted her with the laconic statement:

"You're wanted."

"Has war been declared?" she asked, starting back.

"The war is over," he grimly replied, "and some of your countrymen need your aid. I told

you I would call for you when you were wanted. The time has come. Are you ready?"

"Yes," she replied without a moment's delay.

"Then prepare to go with me at once."

"Where?"

"To Krugersdorp. We are establishing a hospital there and need all the nurses we can get. Can you start immediately?"

"Yes; I'll be ready in ten minutes."

"Very good; time is precious. The news probably has not yet reached here, and we must be out of the city before it does, if I am going to accompany you, for my life would not then be worth a penny."

"I will not delay," she answered, hurrying away, to return within the specified period. In the mean time she gathered together the few effects she had arranged in anticipation of the possibility of this call. Into a satchel she had thrown some few necessary articles of clothing, and on her arm she carried a wrap to protect her from the night air. It caused a pang to leave behind many little articles dear to her, and made the process of selection a

difficult one; but she realized that it was folly to encumber herself and her friend with articles that were not absolutely necessary; so she confined her baggage to the fewest possible essentials.

"I'm ready," she announced.

Kooste gazed at her in admiration. Her cheeks were flushed with excitement, her lips compressed, and her eyes sparkling. Never, he thought, had he seen her so beautiful.

"Good!" was his single comment, as he led the way to the street, carrying the satchel. "I have a carriage in waiting just outside the city. It was dangerous to drive in here, so I left it beyond, but it will not take us long to reach it."

Through the excited thoroughfare he escorted her, but no one molested them, and no one even spoke to him, although he was well known to many who glanced curiously at him as he passed.

"Oh, Mr. Kooste, do you realize the danger to which you are exposing yourself in this city?" whispered Muriel, as they moved swiftly along.

"I realize everything; but I am doing this for your sake. I have not hesitated to face death before, this day; I am ready to face it again."

"Then you were in the fight?" she eagerly asked.

"Sh-h!" he warningly replied. "Don't speak of that here; I'll tell you about it later."

In a few minutes the limits of the city had been passed, and he pointed to two carriages waiting in the distance. One of them contained two of his fellow-countrymen, whom he had evidently taken with him as a sort of a bodyguard in case of trouble, and the other he had reserved for Muriel and himself. Few words were spoken. Kooste tossed the satchel into the second carriage, assisted Muriel to the seat, and then ordered the men in the other carriage to drive on. Holding the lines over the beautiful pair of stallions in the second carriage, Kooste closely followed, and the eighteen-mile ride to Krugersdorp was begun. Up hill and down they dashed, the road stretching out before them like a great white ribbon.

"I'm glad that you are here," he said, after the town had been left a few miles behind and the danger of a clash was eliminated.

"I can't say that I'm glad, but I'm ready to

do my duty, as I told you I would be," Muriel answered.

"Yes, I know—I know," he replied. "I did not mean that I was at all surprised that you had persisted in your determination to come. I felt all along that you would do that; I was referring to your personal safety. It is better for you to be out of Johannesburg. Our men command the heights, and if the Outlanders do not surrender, the city will be levelled to the ground. The order for its bombardment, if the people do not lay down their arms, has already been given. Here, at least, your life is safe. There, I would not be able to guarantee as much in the course of a day or two."

She shivered at the thought.

"And what of the battle?" she asked. "Tell me of that."

"The battle is over," he answered. "Jameson and five hundred of his men, riding from Mafeking, were met by our troops just outside of Krugersdorp. There was a battle, and Jameson is defeated. Those who are living are now prisoners in Krugersdorp. The dead are being buried where they fell. The wounded have been taken to a hos-

pital we are preparing at Krugersdorp, where we will give them the best attention possible. The surgeons are already at work. Some of my countrywomen are doing what they can; but I came for you because I thought an English woman would be more desirable for treating the English, who constitute the greater part of the wounded. Your woman's ingenuity and your woman's heart can do a great deal to alleviate their suffering."

"Then I thank God that I have remained," she said; "I may not be able to do much, but whatsoever is in my power is at their service; and oh, Mr. Kooste, I thank you for the opportunity, and for the kindness which led you to venture into Johannesburg to notify me. You have made me eternally your debtor."

- "It is nothing," he replied.
- "And you were in the fight?" she asked.
- "Yes; when I left you on Monday, after coming from the train, I went to my home at Potchefstroom, as I was ordered. Shortly after Jameson had crossed the border, we received the news, and Commandant Cronje ordered us to follow him to Krugersdorp. We knew that Jameson would pass

through or near that place, and we had full information as to his numbers and purpose. We rode all night, and got there ahead of him. He tried to fight his way through; but we stopped him, and compelled him to surrender. I don't know how many of his men are killed and wounded, but there are many. Only a few on our side were wounded, Cronje's son among them. He's down there at the hospital, too. As soon as the battle was over, this afternoon, I thought of you and started for Johannesburg, in order to reach the city before the news of the battle should arrive. The rest of the story you already know.

"There is a storm coming," he said, by way of apology for the jolting caused by whipping up the horses. He pointed to the west, in which heavy clouds could be seen gathering. Onward they dashed, the mettlesome stallions gripping the bits in their teeth and plunging wildly forward, closely on the heels of the carriage preceding. It was a race as if for life. The storm clouds had so overcast the sky as to cause an unusual darkness, and at times it was necessary to slightly check the speed of the horses in order to avoid the possibili-

ties of danger lurking in some yawning spruit. The vehicles carried no lights, and in a few minutes Kooste was able to maintain his course only by watching the swaying top of the carriage in front of him, whose white duck covering formed an excellent beacon in the darkness. Several times they escaped disaster by a hair's breadth. The darkness was so intense that it was almost impossible to follow the road, and before they realized it they were thrice brought to a standstill on the verge of a chasm by the shying of the horses, whose instinct was keener than the sight of the drivers. Speed was necessary, however. The storm was rapidly approaching, and a rainstorm in South Africa is a thing to strike terror to the heart. It is a deluge. The very heavens seem to open.

"Halt!"

The horses were pulled up on their haunches and an armed figure could be dimly discerned in the gloom. Muriel gripped Kooste's arm in her excitement.

"Fear nothing; it is one of our outposts," he explained.

The challenge of the sentry was responded to by

the occupants of the first carriage, and a momentary parley resulted.

"What's the matter?" impatiently asked Kooste, who had not alighted.

"He refuses to let us pass," called back one of the men in the first carriage.

"Refuses? Have you shown him the order?"

"Yes; but he says his instructions forbid it after sunset."

"Forbid it? Nonsense! What are we to do?" asked Kooste, alighting and walking toward the sentry.

"You can go back the way you came or outspan here for the night," was the stolid reply.

"What do you mean?" excitedly asked Kooste.

"These are my instructions," answered the sentry.

"But have you read the order? And do you know who I am?" demanded Kooste.

"It makes no difference," was the obdurate response. "We have made our laager for the night, and President Kruger himself could not go through."

"But you have the President's order. Don't

you see what he says: 'Pass Jan Kooste and friends to the hospital.' Do you mean to say that you will not honor that, and that I, who fought all the day, while you, a stripling, were in the background, cannot pass through my own outposts? It is preposterous."

"Then you must be blindfolded," replied the sentry, feeling that in view of the facts he was too literally obeying instructions.

"Blindfolded? Absurd," retorted Kooste.

"Am I an enemy or a suspicious character that I should be blindfolded while passing through a laager of my countrymen?"

"You cannot go through otherwise," said the lad firmly. "We are waiting for an attack from the Outlanders of Johannesburg. They are expected to come out here at any moment, and we are waiting to meet them. My instructions were to let no one pass after sunset; but, in view of your rank, I am going to make an exception. I do not know your companions and the lady, however, and I insist that if they pass through the laager they shall be blindfolded so that they cannot obtain any information which will be of service to them."

"My comrades are as loyal as myself," warmly protested Kooste. "And as for this lady, she has volunteered to come out here to nurse your wounded countrymen. Do you dare tell me that you will submit her to such an indignity? Besides, think of it! The night is so dark that she cannot see her hand in front of her face. What information could she gain by passing around or through the laager?"

But the sentry was obstinate. He admitted that the arguments of Kooste were strong, and finally he announced a decision which was accepted by Kooste because time was valuable. The storm was coming closer and closer, and much time that could be ill spared had already been consumed in a profitless dispute.

"You may pass," said the sentry, relentingly, but you must be blindfolded, excepting the lady. You men will have to go on foot. She may stay in the carriage, and I will drive for her."

The sentry called several of his companions, and, after binding handkerchiefs over the eyes of the three men, Kooste and his two companions were led in single file through the laager. Muriel

followed in the carriage, with the young Boer sentry as her driver. She almost smiled at the caution which he had observed. As they advanced through the camp, she could distinguish to the right and left the outlines of wagons, of picketed horses, and of recumbent figures, but nothing more. A quarter of a mile of this slow advance and then the laager had been passed. The handkerchiefs were removed from the eyes of Kooste and his associates, and after apologizing for the inconvenience, the sentries bade them a pleasant good-night.

Onward the carriages again dashed. The goal was now within sight. Below the murky clouds an occasional flicker of light marked Krugersdorp. It was a welcome beacon. The wind was whistling with a fierce threat on its lips, the distant rumble of thunder was growling in a menacing undertone, and the lightning was flashing as if the sheet of flame which marked each flash was a wild animal springing in its leash. The next halt of the little party was made before the little corrugated iron structure in Krugersdorp which was dignified by the name of Varley's Hotel. It was a terribly shabby place and the accommodations

were of the roughest kind. But Muriel was so worn out by the physical fatigue of the journey and the terror inspired by the approaching storm that she welcomed it as a haven of refuge. Hardly had she lifted the latch of the door when the storm broke in all its fury. It seemed to her as if the Deluge was to be repeated, and it was with a thankful heart that she threw herself on her knees by the side of the cot in the barren little room on the ground floor, which had been assigned to her.

"Thank God! His mercy seems to envelop and protect me. I am here, safe, at last."

# CHAPTER XVIII.

At daylight the next morning Muriel awoke from a troubled sleep. She had laid down on her cot without undressing, worn in mind and body by the incidents of the day, but the few hours of rest had refreshed her somewhat. It was a glorious morning. As she threw open the shutters of her room, the fresh air greeted her with a rush that tingled every nerve in her body, and the brilliant sunrise furnished an inspiration as it reflected on the beautiful hills in the distance. Early as it was, when she opened the door of her room she found the faithful Kooste awaiting her. "I am ready," she said, responding to his formal greeting by extending her hand to emphasize her confidence.

- "Have you had breakfast?" he asked.
- "Breakfast?" she repeated. "That is the farthest thing from my thoughts."
- "Ah, but you must think of it," he said. "You cannot work unless you eat; and the duty to which

you have called yourself will be a severe strain on your nerves without unnecessarily adding to it. You must have a cup of coffee at least," he continued, and he immediately set about seeing that this nourishment, together with an egg and a little toast, was supplied her. She felt that his advice was good, and she adopted his suggestion by partaking with a relish which surprised her.

Immediately after breakfast he led the way to the improvised hospital. She found that there was no regular institution of that character in the town, and the best that could be done was to fit up, as well as they could with their limited means, a draper's shop in a large brick building. Here some of the wounded were already lying on mattresses on the floor, while others were being brought in as rapidly as possible from the battlefield. The scene was a terrible one; but she had in a measure fortified her nerves by previously picturing the condition of affairs she expected to meet, and in this way lessening the shock of the actual contact. Two surgeons were busily at work, and a few of the townswomen were endeavoring to assist so far as it was possible for them to be of assistance.

"Have you no cots here?" asked Muriel as soon as she had divested herself of her hat and outer clothing and had arrayed herself in a garment of light seersucker cloth.

"I think there are some in the town," replied Kooste. "Do you want some?"

"Yes; it will be more comfortable for these poor fellows, and more easy for us to attend to them."

The cots were promptly brought, the mattresses transferred to them, and then the wounded men were laid on the mattresses. Those who were conscious of the change which was being made expressed their gratitude by their eyes. Some of them were so badly wounded as to be apparently dead. Others were in a delirium, calling for this one or that one, or shrieking again oaths, orders, or commands, as in their imagination they once more fought the battle of the previous days. Those who were only slightly wounded maintained a stoical silence. There were thirty-four Englishmen in the hospital and about half a dozen Boers. But no distinction was made between the late combatants, and they were arranged side by side in

the order in which they came to the hospital. One or two of the English officers, because of their rank, were placed in little enclosures near the window.

There were many things needed to make the barren storehouse at all comfortable as a hospital. The details of this transformation the two surgeons in attendance were glad to leave entirely in Muriel's hands. Dr. Deeker and Dr. Viljoen were employed to the extent of their ability in treating the wounded, and had no time to give to the perfection of minor shortcomings. The business-like way in which Muriel obtained and arranged the cots made a strong impression on them, and when she called for slates to tie at the head of each patient's cot, for the purpose of recording thereon their names, residences, and the fluctuations of pulse and temperature, they saw that she was entirely capable of assuming the responsibility they were glad to resign to her. Kooste was an invaluable lieutenant. He was constantly at her elbow, ready to comply with her slightest request. If the resources of the little town could not provide linen and delicacies for the patients, he was only too glad

to make expeditions to Johannesburg in order to obtain them. The "commandeering" process was executed with a rapidity which would have startled an army commissary. Whatever she required, she had only to make the suggestion to Kooste, and it was immediately supplied. There were many things needed—curtains for some of the windows, draperies, cots, mattresses, linen, and rubber sheeting, and various little delicacies to tempt the appetite of the wounded during convalesence. It was a great pleasure for her to supply these. Two or three trained nurses had been obtained to assist her in the work, and their first task was that of recording on the slates the names and residences of the patients. It was a matter of considerable difficulty to obtain some data, and several of the slates had to be left blank because of the feverish or unconscious condition of the sufferers. So far as it was possible, the names of these unconscious ones were obtained from some of the other patients who knew them. But it happened that in several cases it was impossible to obtain this information from the others, for the reason that the men had been recruited from different

sections of the country and were not all intimately acquainted with each other.

There were some who never again in this world were able to respond to their names. The wounds they had received produced a blissful unconsciousness which rendered them oblivious to their sufferings, and which finally ended in that long sleep that knows no awakening. Muriel tenderly closed the eyes of these, her countrymen, and paid to their memory the tribute of a woman's tears. She knew that far across the seas fond hearts were aching for them, and her own throbbed in ready sympathy. She assisted in preparing their names so far as she could ascertain them, and then saw that they were duly transmitted to the cable office.

And Jack! From the moment she reached the hospital he had been uppermost in her thoughts, and as each wounded trooper was brought in she scanned him closely to see if by any possibility he could be the original of the picture which was always in her mind; but her quest was a disappointing one. None of the men looked like him; none of them answered to his name, and, so far as she could learn from inquiries directed to the conscious

patients, he was not known to have been with the the troopers. He might have been taken prisoner or have escaped, she was informed, and that furnished her a little consolation, until she told herself that it was possible he was not connected with the raid at all. The fact that she could learn nothing concerning him did not lessen her ardor in behalf of the others at the hospital. If he was dear to her heart, the others also claimed a share of her affection by all the ties of blood and kindred, and she worked in their behalf just as she hoped somebody else might have worked in her place had Jack been one of the sufferers. There was one incident in which her woman's heart assisted in re-uniting two lovers who had parted because of a misunderstanding somewhat similar to her own case. One of her patients was a Boer—a tall, strapping young fellow, evidently fresh from a farm. He had been shot through the body, and she supposed that his mutterings were the consequences of the resultant fever. As she placed her hand on his forehead, however, she noticed that his brow was cool, and also that pulse and temperature were but little above the normal.

"Nurse," said he, calling her as she went by his cot, "would you do me a great favor?" He spoke clearly, but with a slight Dutch accent.

"Most certainly. What is it?"

"I want to write to Peggy."

"To whom?" she asked in surprise.

"To Peggy. Peggy is my sweetheart, you know," he continued, as if that fact must have been patent to her. "We quarrelled, and I left her. Now I know she is breaking her heart, and perhaps thinking me dead, and I want to let her know that I am here and wounded, but alive, and that I would like to see her."

So to Peggy she wrote the rough love letter which he dictated, and posted it without delay. What was her gratification to receive in a few days a reply to this letter, followed shortly afterward by the appearance of Peggy herself. Her full name was Peggy O'Reilly, and she was evidently the descendant of some Irishman who had emigrated to the country and intermarried with the Dutch. The gratitude of this young couple at the reconciliation which Muriel was instrumental in effecting was not greater than her own happi-

ness in being a party to it. This was but one of many little incidents which came under her observation in the hospital.

"I met an old school friend down there on the battlefield," said one young Englishman, addressing his comrade on the next bed. "I hadn't seen him for five years before. He went to college with me in old England, and we were great friends. Since he came back home I lost track of him. Out there at Vlakfontein I had my gun levelled at a fellow who was pointing his rifle at me. It was a case of seeing who could shoot first, and I was just about to pull the trigger of my rifle when I recognized my little Dutch school friend. He recognized me at the same moment, and, running over to where I was, embraced me instead of boring me through with a rifle shot. As he came toward me a shot from some other fellow's rifle gave me this jab here in my shoulder, and I fell. He picked me up, turned me over to some of my own comrades, and then ran back to his own lines. Wasn't that a strange meeting?"

"Yes; some of these Boers are not half bad," responded the other. "They're a damned sight

better than some of those cowardly Outlanders who asked us to come and help them and then let us be cut to pieces in a hole without attempting to give us any assistance."

Then he went off into a string of objurgations, in which he was liberally joined by some of his comrades.

"Wonder what they'll do with us?" asked another from the opposite side of the room.

"Give it up," was the careless response. "I'm not going to worry myself on that score; I think it'll be just about as well for us if the doctors would let us go under. If the boot were on the other leg, and they tried to go through our country in this fashion, I fancy we'd give them about enough time to say their prayers and then stand them up in a line with their eyes blindfolded and——"

The speaker finished his sentence by making a suggestive clucking noise with his tongue and a motion with his finger as if pulling a trigger of a rifle.

# CHAPTER XIX.

It was midnight in the little hospital. Muriel had finished her duties of applying fresh dressings, administering medicine and arranging the beds of the patients with one of the doctors, and had seated herself at the table in the centre of the large room, which served as a general hospital ward, to complete her period of watch duty. She felt highly gratified at the result of her efforts in behalf of the wounded, particularly so in view of the compliment which Dr. Deeker had just paid her. He had left his surgical instruments, a glittering array of forbidding steel knives and saws, lying on a little table in the ward, and she had suggested that she place them somewhere out of the sight of the patients.

"Now, how did you happen to think of that?" he asked, stopping in his work and looking at her with a smile.

"Why, I simply thought it might not be pleas-

ant for some poor fellow to awake and see those horrible things, which perhaps had just taken off an arm or a leg, staring at him."

"You say you've never been a nurse?" he queried.

"Never," she replied.

"Then will you tell me where you learned so well the duties of a nurse?" he asked. "I have been admiring your work ever since you came here. I really don't see how we could have got along without you. You seem to know exactly what ought to be done and exactly how to do it. It is almost impossible to believe that you have not trained yourself for that profession. You have been at our side even on some of the most severe operations. The ordinary woman would not have been able to stand it, and I must say that, without flattering you at all, you are a most extraordinary woman. I am sure you deserve the thanks, not alone of the patients, but of the doctors, as well."

"Oh, I have done very little," she modestly answered; "very little, indeed, in comparison with what I would like to have been able to do. It is true that I have never trained myself for the pro-

fession of nursing, but I have been greatly interested in philanthropic hospital work, and many times, while visiting such institutions with my mother, I have been interested to note the manner in which the nurses work. Perhaps in that way I have learned something by unconscious observation."

"Conscious or unconscious, you must have used your eyes to very good advantage. Well," he added, "I think I may safely leave the place in your care now and try and get a little sleep. If you need me during the night, don't hesitate to call me. Good night!"

"Good night!" she replied, and then, left alone in charge of the room, she resumed her book. The title of it was a peculiar one—for her. Instead of a French novel, which had hitherto formed the pièce de resistance of her literary diet, it was a plain, black volume, on whose flexible cover was printed in gold letters the words, "Holy Bible." A few months before that book would have had little interest for her, but the curious transformation of events connected with her life had worked a curious transformation in herself. It seemed as if

years had passed since she left England, so rapidly had one exciting incident followed on the heels of another. From a frivolous girl, devoted entirely to her own selfish enjoyment, she had suddenly evolved into a woman, who, by serious contact with life, had become impressed with its grave responsibilities. Because of this transformation she was able to find a fascination and a comfort in the little Bible which had been presented to her by her mother, but which, until her arrival in Johannesburg, had been sadly neglected in an obscure corner of her trunk.

A heavily shaded lamp protected the sleeping patients from the annoying glare of the light, and still furnished her with opportunities for enjoying her book. Outside there was no noise except the occasional murmur of the winds. The town was wrapped in sleep and darkness. Within the hospital the silence was so intense that the ticking of the little alarm clock in front of her sounded to her almost as loud as the tones of St. Paul's bells. Occasionally a patient would groan as a fresh dart of pain racked his body or as he disturbed a bandaged wound by turning into a fresh position on his cot.

238

Once in awhile there would be a gentle call of "Nurse!" followed by a request for a drink of water, or that the pillow might be softened, or some other little favor; but for the greater part of the time she was permitted to bury herself in the book.

# "Muriel! Muriel!"

She sat bolt upright at the sound and clinched her hands in the intensity of her emotion. "What was that?" she asked herself. It was low, and long drawn out, and seemed to be more like a gasp than an articulate tone. A murmur of the wind reassured her.

"What a child I am!" she said, half aloud, resuming her seat. "It was nothing but the wind whistling round the corner. I am letting my fancies run away with me."

## "Muriel!"

Again it seemed to come, less distinct even than before. She felt that she could hardly believe her ears, but the impression on her mind was so strong that she walked through the ward to see if some poor fellow was not calling in his sleep; but no one seemed to be stirring. One or two were lying

wide awake, staring at the wall, but they said they had not called, and that they had heard no call. A movement on the part of a patient in the farther end of the room attracted her attention, and she proceeded in this direction.

"It must be this poor fellow," she said sympathetically. "I'll see if there is anything I can do for him. The doctors say he is very badly wounded and that there are grave fears for his recovery."

The patient in question was one of the Englishmen. A shot had gone clear through his body. "A couple of inches to one side, and it would have gone through his heart," the doctor said. The wound had become inflamed as a consequence of long inattention on the field, and by the time the victim reached the hospital a high fever had set in. He raved over and over again about the exciting scenes of the fight, but nothing could be learned from him or from the other patients regarding his identity. When Muriel reached his side, she found him muttering to himself; but only a word here and there was distinguishable, and these words formed nothing that could give her a coherent idea of their purport.

"Poor fellow!" she said softly, as she arranged his pillow and tenderly brushed back his hair from his moist forehead. The wounded man stirred uneasily, and again there came to her ears that long, low, drawn-out, gasping ejaculation, "Muriel!"

She started back in astonishment. Could it be Jack? she asked herself. But no, that was not Jack. In the first place, he looked taller than Jack. His face was thinner than Jack's. He had a full growth of tawny whiskers, while Jack was beardless; and his voice—no, that voice was not Jack's. Long and earnestly she looked at him, and then slowly shook her head, as if to confirm the denial of his identity. But the name? Had she heard correctly, or was it simply a coincidence that the name he had called was her own? As she stood there smoothing his hair, he again moved restlessly on his pillow, and, as he did so, something fell to the floor. She picked it up, and was about to replace it when a peculiarity of the article attracted her attention. It was apparently a small photograph, set in a little case. She glanced at it as she was about to return it to its place under the

wounded man's pillow, and the next instant she was on her knees by his bedside.

"Jack! Oh, Jack! Thank God, I have found you at last!"

Gone was the self-control of the nurse. The heart of the woman was in the ascendant, and, regardless of the surroundings and of the quiet desired by the other patients, she poured out the thanksgiving of a joyful soul in a tone which penetrated every corner of the room. It seemed as if the intensity of her voice penetrated even to the deepest consciousness of the feverish patient, for, as she cried out, he moved as if animated by some sudden shock and rested on his elbow while he stared at her with his large and feverishly brilliant eyes.

"Muriel," he said, and his voice was tremulous with great joy. Then he gazed from her to the wall of the semi-darkened hospital and asked: "Where am I?"

"Hush, dear," said Muriel, throwing her arms around his neck and endeavoring to restore him to his previous reclining position. "Hush! You must not excite yourself. You have been wounded, and you are now in the hospital at Krugersdorp."

"Krugersdorp?" he asked stupidly. "Ah, yes, now I remember!" he added, a smile coming out on his face. "There was a fight with the Boers, and I was wounded; but why are you here?"

"Because you are here, dear."

"But I left you in England," he said, his brow wrinkling, as if unable to make that fact agree with the fact of her presence by his bedside.

"Yes, I know," she said, "but when I received your letter I determined that I would try and find you here and in some way let you know that the surmises you entertain were entirely incorrect; and, oh, God has been so good to me, Jack!"

"And to me, too," he said softly. "When I reached this country I was the most miserable fellow on earth. Now I am the happiest. It was worth going through it all to have you here—the ride and the fight. Oh, Muriel, that ride and that fight! They came on us from all sides. Some of the boys are dead, and more of them are dying. Oh, it was terrible!"

"Hush, dear! You must neither think nor talk of it now. You must go to sleep and not excite yourself any more. If you keep on talking, you

will bring on the fever again, and that might be fatal."

But talk he would. His lucid period was but a temporary one, and, as the excitement of the fight again recurred to him, he lapsed into another period of aberration.

"Muriel!" he whispered, "I'm slipping away from you again. Here, take my hand. Oh, you're so far off. Muriel!" and with one last effort he extended his hand, which she grasped in her own and covered with kisses. Then he raved for hours over the incidents of the past few months of his career. Now he was directing Pat, or asking advice from Harrington, or repeating the reminiscences of the troopers, or he was riding with them in the midst of the fray.

The night had passed and dawn appeared, but still the kneeling figure by his bedside held his hand, and in her thanksgiving for his recovery mingled many a heartfelt prayer that he might be spared from the immediate dangers that threatened him. The other patients stared at her with curious eyes, and when the doctor arrived for his morning visit, called his attention to her, and re-

lated the circumstances so far as they understood them. He touched her on the shoulder and called her from the devotion into which she had completely buried herself.

"This will not do, Miss Sterling," he said. "You must not stay here."

"But, oh, doctor, I have found-"

"Yes, yes, I know," he interrupted; "but you may have found him only to lose him, unless you realize that this is the beginning of his danger, rather than the end of it. He will need your best care for weeks. With that it may be possible to pull him through. But if you are to give him that care you must compose yourself and maintain your steadiest nerve, and that is impossible unless you eat and sleep. Now, go to your room and rest. I will need your assistance, and I want to be able to command it at its best when I call on you."

With a gentle hand he pushed her from the room, after she had given the raving patient a parting kiss, and then, as a counterbalance to the excitement of the night, she fell into a deep sleep, in which her future and that of Jack was intertwined in the most roseate colors.

### CHAPTER XX.

MURIEL's first duty, when she awoke that afternoon, was to dispatch Kooste to Johannesburg with two cablegrams. The first was to Lady Stanmore. She could not contain herself to wait to write to her good friend, and this is what the latter read, a few hours later: "Have found Jack. Letter."

The second cablegram was to Jack's mother. She pictured to herself the anxiety of the members of his family, knowing, possibly, that he was with the troopers, and probably fearing the worst. It was a simple statement to the effect that he had been wounded, but was all right, and was signed with his own name.

These two messages brought unexpected joy in both quarters. Lady Stanmore danced with delight, and hurried to tell the other members of the party the news. Then she plunged herself into dismay in speculating as to how Muriel found

him, where she found him, and various other questions which the cablegram did not answer.

"She must have found him there in that hospital, wherever it was," she announced with decision, after propounding these questions to herself for the fortieth time. "It was her determination to work as a nurse, and I'll wager that is just how it all came about."

"How romantic!" shrieked Miss St. John in a perfect ecstacy of delight. "Oh, I'd give the world to be in her place!"

"You would? I thought you said you'd faint at the very sight of blood."

"Oh, so I would! I wouldn't like the blood; but isn't the rest of it perfectly lovely?"

"It certainly is," replied Lady Stanmore, smiling at the dispatch which she held in her hand. "'Letter,'" she read. "That means that she is going to write me full particulars. Oh, how I wish that letter would come! I am so glad for that poor girl that I feel like standing on my head. Well, I suppose we will have to be patient and wait until the mail comes, but when the letter arrives I will let you girls know at once."

"Oh, do!" they entreated, as they took their departure.

Meanwhile a highly different scene was being enacted at Jack's home. A message had been received that he was dead, and this news, coupled with the recent death of his brother, was a terrible shock to his mother and sister, who were the only survivors of the family.

His mother accused herself of all manner of heartlessness in permitting him to go to that far-away country, and his sister felt that she, too, had been to blame for not urging him to remain at home. Now they were left alone, and, according to the law, the entail of the estates must descend to another branch of the family.

They had cabled to have his body sent home, if possible; but they had been informed that such a proceeding was hardly to be expected. A soldier falling in battle and buried by the Boers was not to be easily recovered, and they never expected to be able to gaze upon his face again, or even to have the mournful privilege of placing him beside his ancestors. In lieu of this, they had arranged

a memorial service in the little chapel, and this was in progress.

The clergyman was giving them what comfort he could with the consoling words: "I am the resurrection and the life," and with the immortal paradox, "He that believeth in me, though dead, shall never die." Their tears were falling fast when the old butler was summoned to the door to meet a boy from the telegraph office. He appeared to be unduly excited over his errand as he handed the envelope to the butler. It was addressed to Jack's mother, and the butler put it in his pocket, to await a more favorable opportunity of presenting it.

"The manager said it was very important," the boy added, "and he told me to say that it was from South Africa."

"From South Africa?" echoed the astonished factotum.

"Yes, and it's about Master John," was the lad's breathless response. He had evidently been informed of the contents. It was now the old butler's turn to become excited. He did not know what to do. His first thought was to hold the message

until the service had been concluded, but the intuition he felt as to its contents would not permit him to delay.

Instead of so doing, he summoned one of the nearest relatives of the family to the door and explained to him what the messenger had said.

"Open it and see," commanded the latter. "I'll explain to Lady Derrington."

With trembling hands the old man broke the seal and read. Then, with eyes filled with tears, he passed the paper to the other, who glanced at the inscription: "Am wounded, but safe in hospital Krugersdorp. Don't worry."

"It's signed by Jack, too," he added, and, without further delay, he proceeded down the aisle
to where Lady Derrington was seated and placed
the paper in her hands. She uttered a slight
scream as she read the message, and then fell forward in a faint. This attracted the attention of
all present, and several ran to her assistance. It
took but a moment to revive her, when she explained the cause of her excitement.

"Jack is alive. My dear boy is wounded, but

safe. He has sent this message himself. O God, I thank Thee!" she cried, throwing herself on her knees.

This incident completely disturbed the funeral service. The clergyman paused in dismay at the sudden interruption, and the hitherto mourning relatives gave way to a jubilation entirely out of harmony with the surroundings.

"Jack alive!" they cried in astonishment.
"Then we will not go on with the service."

"Yes, yes, let us go on," protested Lady Derrington, "but instead of a funeral memorial service, let us change it to one of praise and thanksgiving for the safety of the dear one who we hope will soon return to us."

And that is exactly what they did. He who a few moments before had been mourned for as dead, was rejoiced over as if he had been miraculously resurrected. The clergyman was informed of the contents of the message, and gave out several hymns, which were sung with an emotion which crowded all gloomy thoughts away and left his little congregation in a fervor of delight.

This delight was shared, not only by themselves, but by the entire country as well. Even the Queen sent her congratulations, and the story was told the length and breadth of the land.

# CHAPTER XXI.

MEANWHILE Jack was fighting a hard battle with death. His wound was a very severe one and the fever made tremendous encroaches upon his vitality. Luckily for him this had not been impaired during his residence in Africa, and the steady life of his younger days formed a barricade which Death vainly tried to storm. It was a fortnight later before he fully recovered consciousness and was declared out of danger. The image of Muriel had been constantly with him during his delirium, but it was with surprise that he again awoke and found her kneeling by his side and holding his hand, just as she had held it when he last greeted her.

- "Muriel!" he feebly cried.
- "Yes, Jack."
- "Oh, I am so glad that you are here! I've had such a frightful dream."
  - "There, dear, don't let dreams worry you any

more. I am here, and you are safe. Now quiet yourself and in a few days more you will be able to leave the hospital. The doctor has told me so."

"I'm not complaining. On the contrary, I am supremely happy. But I have been living again those dreadful months, and my dreams have worried me; I thought we were separated forever."

"Never again, let us hope, dear."

"I've forgotten my prayers, but I'll say 'Amen!' to that," he replied, with a feeble smile. "Oh, Muriel, I am so happy, except when I think of the past! And now, when I have you with me, I feel that I am doubly compensated for all my troubles. I wonder where Pat is?"

" Pat?"

"Yes, my servant. Dear old Pat! I wonder if he was killed? He's not here, is he? Pat O'Hara is his name. He stuck to me like a brother. Did you notice his name here?" he asked, raising himself on his elbow and anxiously scrutinizing the other cots in the place.

"No, there is no such name here," answered Muriel.

"Poor Pat!" he whispered. "He was with me

always. He wouldn't let me leave him in England, and when I started off to join the troopers he insisted on accompanying me. The last thing I remember was falling from my horse and finding myself in his faithful arms. He laid me under a tree and went to get some water for me, and he never came back—that is, I never saw him again. I think I must have lost consciousness about that time. And Alexander, and Jenkins, and Sanderson, what became of them? Are they here?"

Muriel sadly shook her head.

"Poor fellows!" he whispered, while he wiped away a tear which welled from his eye and trickled down his cheek.

"Ah, they were a brave lot, Dr. Jim and all the rest! When we heard that the Boers might attack the women and children of Johannesburg, we started for that place at top speed. Oh, what a ride that was! We hardly left our saddles the entire time, and we were so tired and sleepy that we could hardly keep our places on our horses when the Boers met us. We fired away during the first afternoon, but they had the advantage of us because we were in the open and they were hidden

behind boulders. Then came the fight the next morning. How that came out I don't know."

"The men were all taken prisoners, and they are now in Pretoria," Muriel informed him.

"Then perhaps Pat and Alexander and the others are there."

"It's more than likely. Now, dear, you must quiet yourself and not think about these matters until you are stronger. We must not run the risk of a relapse."

Thus admonished, he lay back on his pillow and closed his eyes. A peaceful smile played about his mouth, but before long he was questioning her again.

"But, Muriel, I can't make out how you came to be away down here, and, more especially, how you came to find me here in this little place," he persisted.

"Well, I'll tell you, if you'll promise not to ask any more questions to-day and not to excite yourself while I am talking. When I received your letter, I realized what a dear, good fellow you were, how much I really thought of you, and how much you must have sacrificed for my sake. I

went and told Lady Stanmore about it, and she suggested a trip to South Africa—for our health, by the way—and invited several friends, including myself. When we were in Johannesburg, and the news of a possible outbreak was received, they returned to England, but I decided to stay. Something told me, Jack, that I would find you. I can't tell you how I knew this, but I felt that in some way we were certain to meet. I volunteered to act as a nurse, and a very good Boer friend of mine conducted me out here to you."

"A Boer?" Jack interrupted, with surprise.

"Yes, a Mr. Kooste; a most excellent fellow, too. What I would have done but for him I'm sure I do not know. I am certain that but for his kindness I would now be in Johannesburg instead of by your side."

"And where would I have been if you had not come?" he asked.

"Oh, don't speak of that! It is enough that I came and did what I deemed to be my duty under the circumstances. I was here nearly a week before I discovered you, so changed had you become, and I only did for you what I tried to do for all

the others. I was sitting here one night when I heard you call my name, or thought I did, and when I came to you, you were muttering a lot of incoherent talk. I did not recognize you at first, until my picture fell from under your pillow. Then I knew it was really Jack."

"Your picture?"

"Yes, it was under your pillow."

Jack made a grasp at his throat, and then smiled as she handed him the little picture. "I missed it, even in delirium," he said. "I used to wear it around my neck."

"The probabilities are that one of the nurses took it off when you were brought in and placed it under your pillow for safe keeping."

"Well, what a fortunate circumstance — or, rather, what a chain of fortunate circumstances! It seems almost like a dream. I'll have to pinch myself in order to be convinced that I'm awake.

"Ah, that letter you speak of was written with a sad heart!" he continued. "I left the old country because I thought there was no hope for me in your affections, and I could see no possibility of making the name for myself which you seemed to

desire. I intended to go back if I struck it rich out here; but, as I told you, if fortune failed me, I would have perpetually exiled myself. The one fear in my heart was that before I could possibly make the name and the fortune I hoped to win, some other fellow—Wallace, for example——"

"Please don't mention Wallace again," she blushed, placing her hand over his mouth. "I have already said that I wouldn't marry such a little coxcomb if he was the only man on the face of the earth, and I would be otherwise condemned to an endless existence as an old maid."

"But what could I do, Muriel? I had made neither name nor fortune. I could not place any definite hope on succeeding to the family estates and I could not invite you to share a life where you would be denied the luxuries to which you were accustomed."

"But, Jack, you knew that my fortune was ample to supply any deficiency."

"I know, dearest; but I could not accept you on that basis, could I? So I came out here to make my fortune, and, whisper, I think I've done it. Up there on our farm just before I came away

we struck a vein of gold-bearing quartz. Just what it will amount to I do not know, but my two partners are there working it, and as soon as I get well I intend to see them. Something tells me that the only thing left to complete my happiness will be granted, and that the strike will prove a satisfactory one. I hope so, dear, for the sake of both of us."

"Well, so do I, for your sake," she replied, and then she insisted that the conversation should cease and that he should try and sleep some more. The nurse was again dominating the situation, and he obeyed her admonition with a smile.

## CHAPTER XXII.

It was a weird congregation—that in the square at Krugersdorp on the afternoon of January 2, 1896, and a part of the next day. The troopers had been rounded up like so many sheep—that is, those who had not been killed or wounded, and, as the jail at Krugersdorp would accommodate only a fractional part of them, the great majority were confined behind a strong cordon of Boers in the public square.

This was even better than being locked up in one of the two close, dirty little rooms which constituted the jail, although it was attended with even greater danger. Still, they were privileged to breathe the fresh air, and were not obliged to make constant war on vermin. In these two particulars the advantage was on the side of those in the square.

The danger which confronted them was not quite so loathsome, although it was somewhat more

serious. Beyond the encircling cordon of Boers could be seen a sea of angry, excited faces, and a hundred arms wildly gesticulating, and across the intervening space were hurled cries of "Kill them!" or "Hang them!" This request finally became a threat, and it would doubtless have been carried into execution but for the interference of the guards, who, however much they may have sympathized with the desires of their countrymen, dared not comply with the savage request or permit the threats to be carried out.

Gone was the dull stolidity of the populace. It was replaced by an excited fanaticism. They are slow to anger, and equally slow to forgiveness. There was in their manner a vindictiveness amounting to hate. They derided their captives in the bitterest language they could employ, and the fact that only a fraction of what they said was understood by their prisoners did not seem to detract from the satisfaction they derived from giving utterance to it. It was hardly to be expected that they would view the situation through English eyes, and of the particular reason which animated the raiders in their wild course they were then in

ignorance. At that time Jameson's dispatch box, containing the letter from the Johannesburg committee, begging him to come to their assistance, had not become public property. As the Boers summed up the matter, this was simply another assault by the English on their cherished liberties and an attempt to subjugate them just as they had subjugated their fathers in the south countries. They believed the hand of God was in the failure, and they taunted the captives, not only of the ill-success of this attempt, but of that rankling thorn in the British heart (which is also the great pride of the Boer), Majuba Hill.

Around Jameson they danced like a parcel of demons. Next to Cecil Rhodes, he was the man they most hated, and now they had him in their power. They jeered at him, shook their fists at him, and even tried to spit on him. But calm, unnoticing, imperturbable, greater in adversity than he had been in prosperity, he pulled his hat over his eyes and nonchalantly puffed away at a cigarette. His coolness was an inspiration to his men. Seeing that he was not dismayed by the turn events had taken, they, too, decided to put a brave face

on the matter. A few of them were fearful, however.

"What do you suppose they'll do with us?" asked one white-faced stripling.

"Hang us, maybe," retorted a bronzed veteran of thirty-five, expectorating, as he withdrew his pipe from his mouth.

"Oh, why did I ever leave home?" continued the boy. "If I had been shot, I wouldn't have cared so much; but to die at the hands of these ruffians——"

"Shut up!" retorted the other, glaring savagely at him. "Don't be a baby; you ain't dead yet. Do you want to let them see that you are afraid of them? Hush up! That's what would please them most. What do you say, Irish?"

"Divil a word," answered Pat.

"What! Are you afraid, too?"

"Well, there are places in the wurrld I'd rather be nor here."

"I suppose you'd rather be on your estates in Ireland than here, eh?"

"Well, a sight o' ould Ireland would be more t' me mind than this place; but so far as estates go,

all I ever expect to have is six foot o'earth, an' I suppose I'll get that here as well as elsewhere, although the divil a bit of a hurry am I in to foreclose the mortgage."

"Good for you, Irish," was the hearty comment, as a laugh went around the little group at his quaint answer.

"I wouldn't mind," continued the youngster, desirous of vindicating himself, "if we hadn't been caught in such a miserable way. Now, we'd have fought our way through if some of those people in Johannesburg, who were so anxious to have us help them, had helped themselves by coming out and showing us the way into the place."

"Don't mention them," retorted the veteran savagely. "They're brave enough in talk. Let the dead past bury the past. D——n them, they got us into the hole, and now we'll get out, if we get out at all, without asking their help."

"Yes; but how are we to get out?" asked the boy.

"I'm no clairvoyant; ask me something easier," retorted the other; "but I've been in worse places than this with Dr. Jim, and he's never failed to

pull himself out before, and he wouldn't this time but for—pshaw! I'm wandering again. Well, we're not shot yet, and before we are old Kruger will have a word to say, and likewise Joe Chamberlain, so——"

His remarks were interrupted by the command to march. The Boers had formed in lines on either side of them, the raiders were arranged in columns of fours in the centre, and the long ride to Pretoria was begun.

"Have y' seen anything o' Masther John?" asked Pat of Jenkins as they proceeded.

"Not a sign," replied Jenkins.

"I'm afeard he's dead," was the Irishman's rejoinder. "I left him on the field beyant while I went to get some wather, an' they got me before I could get back. He was desperate bad, I'm thinkin'."

"Perhaps he escaped," suggested Jenkins. "Some of the boys did," he continued reassuringly.

"No; there was no escape for him," was Pat's mournful reply. "He was badly hurt; I could tell that."

"Yes, I'm afraid he's done for," added Alexander. "I came across him on the field, just before the last rush was made, and it was certainly all day with him."

"P'raps 'tis betther so," continued Pat softly; "but he was a brave man," he added, speaking to himself. "I hope the Lord will be good to him."

"Why couldn't we make a break?" asked the youngster who had first spoken. "Here are nearly five hundred of us; there are scarcely more of them. If we were to make a dash in different directions, there would be hope of some of us reaching Johannesburg."

"Yes; we could make a break," retorted the veteran; "but——" He grunted significantly and resumed his pipe without deigning to complete his objection in words.

"If it wor a steeplechase, we'd have a chance," added Pat; "but their bullets could overtake our horses very quickly, an' if wan o' them said, 'Wait a minute!' I'm thinkin' we'd mind."

"Right you are, Irish," grunted the other. "No, no; we'll see how it ends in some other way. It's

time enough for such a hopeless attempt when there is no other hope."

And so, amid a vicious enthusiasm, they entered Pretoria. The capital was thronged with Boers. The news of the intended arrival of the British had brought in hundreds and thousands from the outlying farms. They jeered the raiders, and even pelted some of them with missiles. Finally the doors of the jail closed on them all.

"No; they must not die," said President Kruger, rising in the midst of his excited cabinet. "We have been greater than they in war; we'll show them that we can also be great in peace."

For forty-eight hours the old man had not touched his bed. The sentiment of the populace was that the English had forfeited all rights to be considered as soldiers of the Queen. They demanded the blood of the Englishmen, and probably but for the determined stand taken by the old President their demands would have been acceded to. He placed a heavy guard about the jail, and threatened to punish his soldiers by forfeiting their

lives if they permitted any harm to come to the Englishmen.

"But this is not war," some remonstrated.

"They are no better than a band of robbers, who come into our country for murder and pillage, and they deserve no better treatment."

"That is only partly true," Kruger answered.
"We now know that pillage was not the motive of most of them. The motives of the leaders we do know, thanks to the information we have been able to obtain, and they shall be punished; but these men were only cats' paws to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for others."

"What do you intend to do with them?"

"Release them."

"Release them?" they asked in astonishment.

"But that will be looked upon as a sign of weakness rather than as one of mercy. We ought to inflict some punishment."

"Let their own government, whose laws they broke before they broke ours, punish them. We will put the burden on it and see how it acquits itself."

"Their government will simply applaud them."

"That may be, although I do not think so. At any rate, it will compel their government to justify itself in the eyes of the world."

"But are we to submit to such an indignity without resenting it?"

"No, we will resent it, but in the proper manner and on the proper persons. These men are not half so much to blame as the Johannesburg leaders, who induced them to come by false promises and lying stories. It is on them we will visit our wrath. They have calumnied us in the eyes of the world, and the world will justify us in punishing them. Against them we have the positive proof. We know who the leaders are, and the letter they sent is now in our possession and can be used against them. Let the matter be settled in our courts, and in the mean time let us turn these prisoners over to the English government."

But still some murmured. They wanted to kill every man in the troop. They argued that such an open act of filibustering, inasmuch as it had cost the Boers money and lives, deserved nothing better than death. But Kruger was obdurate, and crafty in his obduracy.

"No," he said, "let us follow the plan we have outlined. If we take their lives, it will stir up in England a sentiment against us. At the present time we have them in the wrong and no sentiment can justify their actions. If we go to the extreme lengths in which we would be justified, we may stir up a war for which we are not fully prepared. This is simply the preliminary skirmish. We now know just what they want. Let us wait, and, when the time for battle comes, as it surely will come, we will be prepared to fight on more equal terms. I say the prisoners shall be released."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

"Now, Muriel, don't you think I am well enough to leave here?" asked Jack as he arose from his cot and limped, with the assistance of a cane, to where she was sitting.

She smiled at the request; she had heard it a dozen times before; but each time she had shaken her head and had bade him wait a little longer.

"You are hardly strong enough, dear," she replied. "Dr. Deeker said this morning that, while you might get along all right, he would prefer to have you wait another week. It is better not to take chances."

"But I can't wait," he replied, with some impatience. "That letter you handed me a few moments ago contained bad news. It was from my mother. My brother died recently, killed by a fall from a horse, and she wants me to return as soon as possible. The letter was sent to Johannesburg, and has been there a fortnight already.

I feel that I ought to return without a moment's delay."

"In that event, perhaps, it may be managed to have you start to-day."

"Have the doctor arrange it if you can. I am really quite strong, and the long sea voyage will put me on my feet again. I am sick of this place. I feel myself growing more and more petulant every day. I fear that I have already sorely tried your patience with my whims."

"No, no, dear; don't say that. Since the members of the Ambulance Corps arrived, I have been able to devote myself entirely to you. My labor has been one of love, indeed, and it has been very light. I will not let you say that you were petulant. On the contrary, you have been very patient."

Jack glowed with pleasure.

"Well," he added, "my recovery is all owing to you; I fear that but for your care I never would have recovered."

"Oh, yes, you would!" she protested.

"Well, not in such a short space of time," he obstinately persisted. "I can't tell you how much

your presence has aided me, Muriel; it has been a tonic to simply look at you."

"Oh, you flatterer!" she said, and then went to find Dr. Deeker. The doctor at first shook his head; but finally, when the situation was fully explained to him, consented, on condition that Muriel should go with him.

"I will accompany him as far as Johannesburg," she said, "or perhaps to Cape Town. Then I will await some friends and return with them."

"Return with them?" asked Jack in surprise.

"And what am I to do—return alone?"

"The ship's doctor will see that you are well cared for," said Dr. Deeker. "I think there will be no danger once you are in his care."

"But are you going to desert me, Muriel? Am I again to leave you behind?"

"Hush, dear; I would gladly go, but it would hardly be proper, you know, and it is better that you should not wait for me since your departure is so urgent."

"Bother the proprieties," he growled. "I hadn't thought of that." He was silent for a moment, and then he broke out with: "Muriel, why may

we not be married here, and then go back on our honeymoon?"

"Here-in Krugersdorp?"

"No; in Johannesburg. Why need we wait until we go back to England? The rector there can marry us, and we need not delay until we reach home. Besides, if we were to have a grand wedding, we could scarcely do so without another interval of time, because of my brother's recent death."

"I want no grand wedding," said Muriel softly.
"I have lost all ambitions in that line. I would not consent to one under any conditions. I have so changed since I came here that a great display would be simply odious now. Let us be married as quietly as possible."

"Then why not by the rector at Johannesburg?"

"But the time is so short, and there is hardly anybody there whom we know."

"We know Kooste, for one. After all he has done in your behalf—and in mine, too—there is no one whom I would rather have as my best man. And you—can't you think of somebody who would be acceptable to you?"

"I suppose the rector's wife would be very glad to assist me, for that matter; and I'm sure there is no one in this country I would prefer."

"Then why not let us arrange it on that basis?" asked Jack eagerly. "This concerns us most of all. Why need we consider others? With a grand wedding we might overlook some, and thereby give offence. Here we cannot be considered as doing anything of the sort, under the circumstances."

"But I have no trousseau," she laughingly objected.

"I'll pass all that, if you will. For my part, there is no trousseau of which I shall ever be so proud as I am of this little uniform you wear as a nurse."

"Very well, dear; as you will. I fancy that I will be able to make a presentable appearance after I have rummaged through my trunks, which are still at the rector's, and you——"

"And I," he broke in with a laugh. "Well, you're not marrying a suit of clothes, and I am not wedding a trousseau. We'll call all that settled, and I fancy that by settling it so easily we will

have saved ourselves a lot of anxiety, which would otherwise be our lot to bear."

And so it was arranged. The journey to Johannesburg was made without difficulty. Jack declared that he was not at all fatigued; but, on the contrary, quite "fit," a little expression of his own, which he had made use of time and again in the hospital when Muriel, making her daily rounds, inquired as to his condition. The rector was somewhat appalled by the suddenness of the notice, but added that the task assigned to him would be neither a long nor a difficult one. Kooste felt that he was complimented in being selected as assistant, and the rector's wife was likewise happy when Muriel requested her presence.

The ceremony was performed early the next morning, and there were only five persons concerned in it directly, but no grand wedding, with all the attending pomp of Parisian creations, flowers, music, and admiring hundreds, could have produced more than a fraction of the happiness that was evident upon that simple occasion. They lunched with the rector and his wife, and that afternoon took the train for Cape Town, after ascer-

taining that by so doing they would be able to make close connections with one of the fast steamers.

"Who do you think I have just seen, Muriel?" asked Jack as he entered the railroad carriage, after having left her for a few moments in order to make some slight purchases. Muriel couldn't think, and said so.

"Harrington, my American partner," continued Jack, answering his own question. "He arrived in the city yesterday, having come down to see if he could get some clew to my whereabouts. Some one told him I had just started for the station, and he came after me. He was almost out of breath from running, and I had but a minute in which to talk. He told me that the mine promised good results, and I requested him to return at once, after getting some supplies needed in the camp, promising to organize a company when I reached London and supply the machinery which will be necessary to develop the mine. I have here some samples which he brought along. Harrington says they are excellent, and that he has no doubt the mine will be a success. I will have

them analyzed when I return, and if the analysis is satisfactory, I fancy I shall have no difficulty in finding the necessary money to enable the boys to work the find. It seems the wheel of fortune has been given another whirl, and that I am again on top."

"I am so glad—for your sake," said Muriel softly.

"And I-for yours," answered Jack.

At Cape Town they found a steamer just ready to start. They transferred their belongings without difficulty, and in a few hours the steady throb of the machinery told them that they were heading for England.

"I wish I knew what had become of Alexander and Pat and all the others," said Jack meditatively. "I heard that a number of them were killed and were buried in one of the spruits on the field. The others were taken to Pretoria; but who is living and who is dead I could not find out. No communication was allowed. For a few days the whole country was cut off from the outside world. Just before I left I was informed that there was a rumor that they were all to be released and sent as pris-

oners to Cape Town. I could not wait to verify it, however. Poor fellows! I would wait and assist them if I felt I could be of any service."

They were glad to get away from Johannesburg. This overgrown mining city now represented to them little that was pleasant, and much that was painful. A cordon of Boer soldiers surrounded it. and its internal affairs were in a state of panic. Kruger had carried out his word, in ordering the arrest of some of the leaders of the movement which resulted in Jameson's raid, and had completely terrified the populace. Even at that day there were fears that he would order the bombardment of the city. The arms and ammunition which had been so carefully smuggled into the city had been deposited with the high commissioner; but the Boers grumbled that some of these were being held by the Outlanders, and were angry. The battery which had been placed on the heights remained there still. No one could tell who would be the next victim of arrest. One by one the members of the committee had been taken, and everybody stood in fear. Even in their own homes the people spoke in subdued terms. Spies were every-

where. Some of the more venturesome of the fugitives had come back; but the old order of things had not returned. The uprising had been simply a fiasco. There was no question but that President Kruger had won the trick from them. All their carefully planned schemes had failed. That fact settled the whole question. Success commends a cause, however weak in merit; failure simply condemns it.

Whatever others may have thought, there were two persons on the steamer who felt that the trip was a very short one when the chalky cliffs of England loomed up before them one morning. Nevertheless, they, too, were glad to welcome the sight.

"The last time I saw them my heart was heavy," said Jack as he drew Muriel to the rail. "I did not dare to hope that in this short space of time I would be able to look upon them—and with you, too—you, whom I left in England."

"Yes, and, when I saw them last, there were tears in my eyes. Now, if there are tears there, they are tears of gladness."

"Well, well," continued Jack, ruminatively,

"what a strange world is this. The Lord seems to order things to suit purposes which are altogether beyond our conception, and yet his plans work out for the best, after all. When I left here, I was a poor fellow, going out into the world simply as an adventurer. Now I return a prospectively wealthy man as a result of these efforts, and I am also Lord Derrington; and you, Muriel, you are Lady Derrington. Have you thought of that?"

"Yes; I have thought of it, and I am glad of it for your sake; but it would mean nothing to me if you were not my husband."

Whereat he kissed her.

# CHAPTER XXIV.

It was March in old England, and the blush of spring was visible on every hand. Nowhere was the prospect more beautiful than at Derrington Hall, where Jack was now master of the estates and successor to the title, owing to the death of his brother. At the Hall, whose windows twinkled with the reflection of hundreds of lights, the master and mistress were entertaining at dinner a party of their intimate friends. In addition to his mother and sister and other relatives, there was Muriel, now Lady Derrington, Lord and Lady Stanmore, Lord Popham, Mr. Weiss, Georgia Dare and Clara St. John-yes, even Kooste, whose usual gravity had been penetrated by the animation of the scene, and who joined in the fun as heartily as the best of them. Apparently the animosity of the recent conflict had vanished; but it was still a popular topic of conversation—indeed, it may be said to have been the sole topic.

"Wonder what our old friends in Johannesburg are doing now?" asked Miss St. John.

"Digging golt, proberly," answered Mr. Weiss.

"Yes; I imagine they haven't wasted a great deal of time in getting down to business again. No doubt old Kruger has made it cost some of them a pretty penny, and will see that others are properly taxed. Well, those of us who dance must be expected to be called upon to pay the piper. When I think of what might have been—"

"Oh, let us not worry about the might have beens!" coaxed Muriel. "Let us talk of what is."

"I am satisfied to contemplate what is," responded Jack, with a beaming smile at the blushing figure by his side. "But what was, and what might have been, are so intimately associated with it that I occasionally find myself wandering from that particular subject and speculating on the others. Now, if we had reached Johannesburg that day——"

"That's the trouble with the might have beens," interrupted Muriel. "There is always an 'if' somewhere about them."

"Yes; but if there had been no 'if' in the mat-

ter, it may be that we would not be here to-night. 'If' I had not been wounded, and 'if' I had not been taken to the hospital, I might not have met you, and 'if' you had not gone out to the hospital, I might not be here to-night."

"There you are again! Haven't I told you not to exaggerate my importance!"

"To do that would be impossible, Lord Derrington," remarked Kooste. "If that were the only thing to commend your wife, that act alone would mark her as one woman out of a thousand. When I think of that wild ride that night, and of all the incidents associated with it, I sometimes wonder if it was a reality and if I did not dream it."

"What do you think of the 'ifs,' Kooste?" asked Jack.

"So far as the raid was concerned, I think that if the troopers had reached Johannesburg (and they came dangerously near doing that), and if the control of events could have been left in Jameson's hands, there would be no South African Republic to-day. It would have been a fight to the death, but the Transvaal would probably by this time have become an English dominion. I need give no offence,

I think, in saying that personally I am very glad you did not succeed; but if, when you had reached there, you had not stopped to analyze some of the stories which induced Jameson to start, there would have been—well, I shudder to think of all the other 'ifs,'" he concluded. "Let us talk of something more pleasant."

"How about my stock in the Anglo-Saxon Mine?" asked Lord Popham. "Shall I sell or would you advise me to hold on to it?"

"Hold on to it, by all means," replied Jack joyously. "By the way, I received a letter from Harrington to-day, and the mine is 'booming,' to quote his original phrase. As soon as our machinery is set up, there will be millions in it. What's that?" he asked of the butler, who had whispered something to him. "Oh, tell him I can't see him to-night!" he added, with a touch of impatience. "Ask him if he can't come around in the morning?"

"Yes, my lord," replied the old functionary, retreating from the room, only to return in a moment. "He says he must see you, my lord, and will not leave until he does."

"Must see me? He's devilish persistent."

"Yes; he says it is as important that you should see him as it is that he should see you."

"Well, he's a cheeky chap to attempt to dictate in my affairs. You say he's a rough-looking fellow? Did he give you his name?"

"Yes, my lord. He told me to say that 'Pathrick O'Hara, Esquire, late of the survice of Masther John Derrington, later of Dr. Jim's throopers, and later of Pretoria prison, was beyant,'" added the butler, with a funny imitation of an Irish brogue.

"What?" they all cried in unison, each one springing to his or her feet.

"Show him in, by all means!" yelled Jack. "Show him in!"

A moment later and the butler had announced "Pathrick O'Hara, Esquire," and Pat himself was standing in the doorway.

"I beg your pardon, sur," he began, with a bow to the floor. "Shure I thought, sur—that is, I didn't know, sur, that——"

"Never mind what you thought and what you didn't know!" cried Jack, almost embracing his

faithful follower. "Come in here and tell us what you do know. That's what I want to hear: that's what we all want to hear, isn't it?" he asked, appealing to the gathering around the table.

"Yes, yes," was the excited reply.

"First of all let me introduce you to your new mistress," he added, at which the abashed Pat made another of his low bows and mumbled something about "Y'r sarvent, y'r ladyship." It was followed by an introduction to all the others in the simple statement that "This is Pat," which was sufficient to thoroughly identify him.

"Come now, you old rascal, tell us all about yourself and how you happened to desert me when I needed you," continued Jack, banteringly. was it that you happened to leave my service?"

"Faith, sir, 'tis little I thought I'd ever come back to it again," said Pat, softly, brushing his sleeve across his eyes. "Oh, but 'tis me that is glad t' see ye, agin, sur. Many's the day I wundhered what had become of ye. 'Tis only since I r'ached ould England that I heard that you was back agin, forninst me. As soon as those divilish Dutchmen let me go, y' couldn't see my heels for

dust until I struck a ship to take me home, an', sure, the sthory I had to tell was that I had left ye for dead out there."

"Oh, ho! Well, you see I am worth a good many dead men yet," said Jack, trying to hilariously conceal the emotion which he felt.

"Thanks be to God for that, sur."

"To that I'll say 'Amen,' Pat," replied Jack, gravely. "It's not much of a subject for joking; but come, tell us about yourself."

"Well, sur, shure an' there's not much t' tell. Shure, afther those two days of ridin' I felt as if I looked like a clothespin, so I did, an' whin those Dutchmen began to fire at us, faith I fired away, p'intin' this way an' that way, whenever I saw a head, just like a man at a Donnybrook fair. Finally I saw yerself fall from yer horse. 'The Lord bechune us an' all har-r-m,' says I, 'there's the masther's fell from his horse.' With that I jumped down and ran to where ye were. 'Are y' much hurt, sur?' says I. 'Oh, it's nothin'—nothin' at all,' says you, 'but I wish ye'd bring me some wather, Pat,' says y'. I c'd see that y' was badly hit, sur, for y' closed y'r eyes while y' was talkin'

an' y'r voice was tired like, an' y'r face was as white—as white as that table-cloth, sur. It pinched me heart t' lave ve, sur, but I thought the wather would help y', an' so I made a piller from me coat an' fixed it undher y'r head, an' off I ran to a little brook nearby. Divil a thing had I t' carry th' wather but me hat, but I filled that an' was on me way back whin a lot o' thim wild Dutchmen rode over me an' picked me up an' carried me off with them. I tould them all about y', but the blaggards pretended they didn't know what I was sayin', an' in spite o' all I c'd do or say, they tuk me off with them to Pretoria. Faith, sur, many's the time I thought o' y' since, lyin' there with the blood showin' through y'r shirt an' y'r face like that o' a corpse, an' shure I thought y' must have died on the field. Oh, God knows, sur, but 'tis me that is glad to see y' agin," he concluded, and the tears which stood in his eyes found sympathetic wells in the eyes of the others present.

"Yes, yes," said Jack, "and what then?"

"What thin? Divil a much, sur! They dhrove us to Pretoria like a lot o' sheep, an' kep' us there, an' thin they said we was a lot o' omadhauns as

didn't know no betther, an' they let us go. Well, sur, as soon as we could we left the blasthed counthry behind us an' went t' the Cape, an' there we shipped for ould England. I thought y'r mother would like to know about y', an' that was me arrand here, although I was much throubled in me mind as to how I would tell her. Finally I made bould an' came up to the dure. Who should open it but Mary Doyle—beggin' y'r pardin, ma'am, Marie D'Oyle, I believe, is her right name.

- "' Fur the love o' God, Pat O'Hara, an' is that yersel'?' says she.
  - " 'Tis no wan else,' says I, as sthiff as y' plaze.
- "' Wirra, Pat, but 'tis me that is glad t' see ye,' says she, throwin' her arms about me neck an' huggin' me till I was red in the face from the chokin'.
- "'Oh, the masther——' says I, breakin' down intirely. I wanted t' tell her, but divil a wurrd c'd I sphake.
  - "' He's up above,' said she, sphakin' softly like.
- "'I hope so,' says I. 'Faith he desarves a place with the angels,' says I.
- "With that she shrieked with laffin' as if her sides w'd bursht. Faith, I thought she had gone

looney altogether, an' says I, 'May God bechune us an' all har-rm, but the gir-rl is as crazy as a banshee.' With that she bursht out int' some more laffin', an' finally I got mad at her. 'Shame on y',' says I. 'How dar y' laugh at sich a thing? Shame on y'! Y'd dance on y'r mother's coffin.' With that she sthuffed her aprin in her mouth, an' finally, to make a long sthory short, she says, says she, 'Yes, Pat, he's up above, an' he's with an angel, too. Go up,' says she, ''tis he that will want t' see ye.' With that I sushpected that there was a cat in the male somewhere, an' finally she told me as how y' had come back alive, thank God! I was so overi'yed that whin the butler man came back an' told me y' was busy, I couldn't go away until I had seen y', an', faith, I tole him so, as gran' as the lord lootinant o' Ireland, for which I ax y'r pardin', sur, for Mary didn't tell me that there was a dinner party, or I'd have waited. That's all there is to it, sur."

For a moment no one spoke. The recital of the faithful fellow, and his devotion to his master, had brought tears in place of the laughter which greeted his narration of his encounter with Mary Doyle.

"If you had gone away, Pat, I never would have forgiven you," retorted Jack. "Old fellow, I'll never forget all that you tried to do and all that you did. Let me welcome you to Derrington Hall. As long as a roof shelters my head, that roof shall be shared with you; and as for Mary Doyle," he added, "I'll see that my wife fixes up that little matter."

"Thank y' kindly, sur, but 'tis meself as thinks as it is already fixed," blushed Pat, twirling his hat on his thumb and keeping his eyes on that operation in juggling as if it was a matter of life and death to see that the hat was kept spinning. "Shure, whin she hugged me, I hugged her back. 'Will McGinnis mind?' says I. 'An' what if he does?' says she. 'Faith, I don' know,' says I; 'but when I left y', y' was in a fair way to swap y'r name for his, 'says I. 'Divil a fear o'it,' says she, tossin' her head in the air an' tiltin' back that pug nose o' hers. 'I'd rather be called O'Hara any way. Shure, the O'Haras were kings o' Ireland,' says she; an' what c'd I say but approve her ch'ice? So, sur," he concluded, "if Mary can sthay as the maid o' the misthress,

'twould tickle me heart to sthay as the man o' the masther."

"Then tickle your heart at once, lad," said Jack, heartily. "And, now, I call on you for a toast in honor of old times."

"A toast, sur! Shure I know nothin o' what t' say."

"Never mind. Say anything."

"'Twouldn't do for me t' say: 'Here's t' ye as good as ye are, an' here's t' me as bad as I am; for as good as ye are, an' as bad as I am, I'm as good as ye are, as bad as I am.' No, that wouldn't do at all, would it? And yet that's the only one I remember."

"No, that won't do," said Jack, shaking with laughter. "Here, pledge us to whatever is uppermost in your mind."

"Well, sur, th' one person uppermost in my mind is one that's now in sore disthress, from which I hope he will come out wid flyin' colors. Faith, I c'n see him now wid the bullets flyin' all around him, ridin' here an' there to cheer up the boys, an' I c'n see him agin whin we wuz all prisoners an' in the dumps, thinkin' that we might be shot the

nex' minute, goin' around whisperin': 'Buck up, boys!' God bless him! I don' know much about toasts, sur, but if I may ask ye to dhrink to anybody, this is my toast: 'To Dr. Jim!'"

"To Dr. Jim!" they all replied, with a cheer.

"And now, let us say good night. The hour is late and we are excited by the news Pat has brought us. To-morrow we will listen to the rest of the story," remonstrated Jack.

"One moment," interrupted Lady Stanmore. "We have all pledged toasts this evening, but the master of the house remains to be heard from. I move that he be called upon for a final toast."

"Yes, yes; a toast," they urged.

Jack arose and glanced at the enthusiastic little group, standing, with uplifted glasses, around the table, awaiting his announcement. From one to the other his gaze went, as if trying to find an idea for appropriate expression. His eyes were moist with the happiness of the occasion.

"Hark!" he said, raising a warning finger as the strains of the orchestra in the conservatory came softly to his ears. "There's my inspiration. Ah, my heart has changed since last I heard

that air! Then I was taking a last view of old England, not daring to hope that I would ever see it again; and the ship's band added to my sadness by playing that tune. To-night it puts the climax on my happiness. Listen! Do you hear it? Friends all," he concluded, lifting his glass and bowing to his wife, "I pledge you—' The Girl I Left Behind Me!"

THE END.







# THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE STAMPED BELOW

# RENEWED BOOKS ARE SUBJECT TO IMMEDIATE RECALL

LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

Book Slip-70m-9,'65 (F7151s4)458

# Nº 443210

Jewell, A.
Muriel Sterling.

PS3519 E83 M8

LIBRARY UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA DAVIS

